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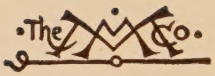

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THE JEWISH LIBRARY

FIRST SERIES

Edited by

RABBI LEO JUNG, PH.D.

New York

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EVERY CHILD OF A JEWISH MOTHER IS A JEW OR JEWESS.

ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF HIS LIFE, A JEWISH BOY, BY MEANS OF THE RITE OF CIRCUMCISION (BRITH MILAH) ENTERS THE COVENANT OF ABRAHAM.

PREFACE

Civilization as such produces bathtubs, policemen and radios. Culture, however, is the flowering of the inspiration of good men and women. Culture is the unfolding of the divine element in human life, the progressive revelation of God above man through God in man.

Judaism essentially is a culture, as rich and broad as life. Hence, *The Jewish Library,* devised to bring home the thousand and one life messages of Judaism, will partake of all the shades and contours of that great canvas. The volumes of *The Jewish Library,* endeavoring to represent Judaism and Jewish life as a whole, will reflect in their contents the dreams of the Jew, his urges and ambitions, his romantic march through the ages, the contemplative atmosphere of the Beth ha-Midrash, the rapture of the Kabbalist, the heroic scorn of the prophet—the complete panorama of Israel.

It is hoped that the publication of a collection of twelve pamphlets may be possible every two years, so that before long an imposing monument of Jewish lore will be ready to radiate to Jew and non-Jew alike, the *Weltanschauung,* no less than the life itself, of the Torah.

A quarter million of the twelve pamphlets here included have been circulated and the demand for

their compilation in one volume has come from many quarters. The first pamphlet has gone through four editions; the others had one each. All have been revised, some augmented. *Vivant sequentes!*

The kindly coöperation of my friends Prof. Nathan Isaacs, Dr. David de Sola Pool and Dr. B. Revel is herewith gratefully acknowledged. Rabbi Abraham Burstein has been good enough to prepare some of the essays for the press and to compile the index.

LEO JUNG

Sivan 5688
June 1928.

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I

ESSENTIALS OF JUDAISM

A Guide to Facts of Jewish Law and Life

BY

RABBI LEO JUNG, PH.D.

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I

ESSENTIALS OF JUDAISM

Judaism is the religion of the Jewish people. Its tenets are based upon the Torah of Moses, the revelation of God to Israel. The Torah teaches the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

The Torah ("Direction")

The Torah declares that God has chosen the Jewish people to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, which means that the Jew is to preach to the world the life in God, a life of kindness, truth, and justice.

To enable them to fulfill their great task, the Jews have been given in the Torah a system of training which embraces all aspects of life, regulating their social and religious relationships and directing all their activities in the spirit of the ideal of their religion.

Thus, the same religious law tells the Jew to keep the Sabbath and to set aside a tenth part of his income for the support of the poor; to observe the dietary laws and to do his share in bettering the lot and the character of his fellow men; to fast on Yom Kippur so that he may be more apt to reflect seriously on his duties and failings; not to oppress the

stranger and to obey the law of the state, whithersoever life may lead him.

The Jew thus finds in the Torah an unfailing direction for every act of his life, an ever-ready guide in every dilemma or perplexity.

Our Twofold Duties Which Are One

The duties of the Jew are divided into two classes: those that exist between man and God, and those that obtain between man and man. "Do what is right before the Lord!" applies to both.

The Jew is told to give time to serious reflection on his own life and on the nature of his association with his own people and with the Gentile.

Esprit de Corps

All membership implies duties as well as privileges. As citizens of the country, members of a college, of a club or a society, we must be mindful of a term which is particularly and peculiarly Jewish. That term is *Kiddush Hashem:* the sanctification of God's name. It means that since we have been singled out from among the nations and have the association with God bestowed upon us, it is our personal affair to see that we represent Him to the best of our powers. As the nation which has received a definite mission from Him, we are responsible for the honor of His name, both individually and collectively. This consciousness ought to make every Jew eminently mindful of the right course in all circumstances. If a Jew behaves meanly, evades teamwork, and grovels for selfish aims, he is not only offending against Jewish law, but is causing the

name of Jew to be degraded by his meanness, and the name of God, who chose the Jew, also to be degraded.

The Fences

Judaism stresses the prevention of sin more than the forgiveness of sins committed. Hence the Jewish life is so arranged as to give a minimum of opportunity for evil and a maximum of ground for good. In accordance with this purpose many "fences" were made around the Torah. Fences may be popularly described as the conviction that prevention is the best cure. If we are told to be exceedingly careful with regard to Sabbath observance, the very restrictions imposed upon us justify themselves in that we who obey these injunctions actually and practically have a day of rest.

Prevention Better Than Atonement

The Jew considers the fact that he is of the chosen people not so much a privilege as a duty. This chosen nation must keep itself pure, must allow no foreign influence to interfere with its religious constitution. Hence our special insistence on our distinctly Jewish religious observances, such as the Hebrew language in our prayers, the dietary laws, and the seventh-day Sabbath, which act as divinely designed preventives of our religious assimilation. We can see all around us the sad example of disloyalty to Judaism, such as in intermarriage. It is surely better to face the problem beforehand and to take the necessary preventive measures than to have the sad situation of a Gentile mother torn within herself as to how to train her child. Shall

it be taught the Jewish religion of her husband or the mysteries of her own faith? This too is a case of prevention through fences.

Instead of deploring poverty, the Torah strives to prevent it. Hence the commandment to support the weak lest he fall, to lend a helping hand to the man who is still capable of recovering, to show brotherhood which helps rather than charity which degrades whilst it pities.

Judaism teaches that life is not a vale of tears, that we are not all doomed to perdition. Judaism insists that this life, this earth, are God-given and therefore good, that we are capable of achieving all great and beautiful things through our own efforts.

Judaism teaches that nobody stands between man and his Creator, that the gates of heaven are open to us whenever we wish to enter.

The Basis of Judaism

The basis of Judaism is both faith and practice. A true Jew believes in Revelation, the divine origin of the Torah. God created this world and made it good, that is, capable of all goodness. Man must coöperate with God in making of this world a place of purity, justice, and love. The Jew's duty is to lead through example. For this it has pleased God to select the Jew. With this task, and with the evidences from history of the uniqueness of our people, we are to derive due lessons whereby to excel in the righteousness of our conduct.

What Is the Torah to Us?

To us Jews the Torah is the book of God, revealed

to Israel and through Israel to all men. We believe implicitly in its divine origin, we accept it as the standard of our life. We obey its commandments, the overwhelming majority of which are clear to us in their meaning. Some are beyond our reason, but none strikes us as incompatible with sound common sense. We have found also that their observance has bestowed great blessings upon our people. We know why we should love our neighbor. The Torah says he is "as thyself" (Lev. xix. 18). We know that the Sabbath is a great blessing and that if man adopted it generally the millennium might be nearer. But we keep the Sabbath because God has commanded it. Modern medical science endorses the hygienic and eugenic value of Jewish life, of the strict observance of the dietary and the marriage laws. But we observe these laws because God has commanded them. As divine laws we know they are helpful in every way. We have adopted them not for their helpfulness, but because God has given them.

What Is the Jewish Law?

Jewish law is composed of the oral law and the written law. The latter is contained in the Pentateuch, the Torah proper. The former was for a long time kept unwritten, handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. "Moses handed it down to Joshua, and Joshua to the Elders, and the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets to the men of the Great Synod, and the men of the Great Synod to the Rabbis" (Mishnah, Aboth I, 1), until with the dispersion of Israel the danger arose

that it might be forgotten. Rabbi Judah the Prince (200 C.E.) finally collected and edited it in the Mishnah. The Mishnah contains the body of Jewish law. As with all other legislation these laws were commented upon to establish their exact force. They were discussed in the Jewish academies of Palestine and Babylonia, and we possess authentic records of these discussions which are called Gemara. About 400 C.E. in Palestine, and about 500 C.E. in Babylonia, they were collected and, together with the Mishnah, were embodied in one great volume, the Talmud. The Talmud is an encyclopedia of Jewish lore and life, for, in addition to the laws, it contains the maxims, parables, and legends which were in vogue through the centuries. Each of the two countries produced its own Talmud, and we have thus the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmudim, of which the latter, more fully preserved, is authoritative for the Jews.

What Is the "Shulchan Aruch"?

These Talmudim contain many thousands of pages of authority and interest to the student; but they are too large and too all-embracing to help the layman in finding the law in every instance. Hence several attempts have been made to excerpt the Talmud or to rearrange it, so that it might be easier even for the unlearned to handle. Maimonides (13 c.) rearranged the Talmud with the view of systematizing its laws, and Rabbi Joseph Caro (17 c.) finally wrote his *Shulchan Aruch,* which in four volumes comprises every aspect of Jewish law: it is our authoritative code. This code, which grew out

of the text of the Talmud together with the many discussions of the rabbis of latter days, is being continually brought up to date by the Responsa (*Teshuvoth*) of the Rabbinic authorities, who have to decide with every change of condition how the immutable law of Judaism is to be applied. There is thus an unbroken chain of Jewish tradition connecting the days of Moses with our own. Never in the whole course of Jewish law has any change been made that was not within the law. All new ordinances were the application of precedent to new conditions. Thus, for example, modern means of transportation which could not have been considered in the Mishnah are dealt with in the Responsa, upon the same principles which decided the primitive traffic of Roman days and the regulation of caravans and camels in the time of Palestinian independence.

The Method of Judaism

Because men are eager to proclaim ideals, yet slow to live up to them, God has given us the method of approaching their realization. Ideals must be made tangible for man to grasp them.

Thus, the duty of right thinking, feeling, and acting is suggested to us through the *tefillin*, which every loyal Jew dons each morning. The *tefillin* are laid upon the head, the seat of thought; opposite the heart, the center of feeling; and upon the hand, the instrument of action, to remind us that whenever we think, feel, or act we ought to be mindful of the message of the scroll which the *tefillin* contain: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with

all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might" (Deut. vi. 4). We express our love for Him who has given us standards of righteousness and of kindness by obeying His law of justice and of love.

Judaism teaches its adherents to be conscious of God's goodness every moment of their lives. The forces which make for the degradation of the individual are never at rest, and to raise ourselves constantly and approach our ideal intermittently we ought never to lose sight of Him and our relation to Him.

The Ceremonies

The ceremonies deepen within us a sense of the Divine; they create around us an atmosphere of spiritual beauty, of sanctity. They bring us into close touch with the Highest.

We wash our hands before the meal in order to eat it in purity before Him, and we say grace at its conclusion. Such practices have been a tremendous factor in helping the Jew to be mindful of his task. The prayer that we and our children say in the morning more strongly imbues us and them with the moral and ethical aims of men than would a hundred sermons or books. Many of our customs have been accepted by the cultured Gentile, though not always with the same motive.

The Significance of Forms

That ceremonies are sometimes observed without the observer being conscious of the idea they embody is surely not their fault, but the fault of

his thoughtlessness. These ceremonies are devised as a means to an end, and Judaism expects the Jew to be ever mindful of their symbolic meaning. The sacrifice was a symbol of the Jew's willingness to offer up his wealth and his energies to God; hence it was true only where it was the expression of an accomplished fact—a truly Jewish life—or at least of a good intention. But some of our people all through our history were foolish or weak or hypocritical enough to offer up these symbols and to belie them through their conduct. Then, of course, the prophets would declare them to be useless and such offerings to be base. The opposition of Isaiah (i. 11ff.) was directed not to the sacrifices themselves, which he strongly upholds, but to the insincerity of those who offered them and disregarded their message.

Sabbath is the day of rest, on which we withdraw from competition and money and devote ourselves to home, family, and religion. It recalls the "rest" of God after the creation of the world, and is meant to give us opportunity of looking at life from a higher level.

To abstain from going to business on the Sabbath is the negative side of this command "to observe the Sabbath day." But the positive side is often overlooked, viz. that we turn our thoughts into spiritual directions. The man who sleeps all Saturday, or who thinks of the day as one on which he is "at leisure" to discuss business after a heavy meal, is neglecting its spiritual side. We are to fast on *Yom Kippur,* to remain all day long in the synagogue, thinking of the dead and the living, reflecting

on our actions and on our duties. But one who fasts on *Yom Kippur,* yet spends the day in joking and in discussing sports and commercial affairs, is completely unconscious of the message of this holy day.

Orthodoxy: What It Is and How the Term Originated

Our people knew no distinction between Jew and Jew, just as the problems of abstract theology did not trouble a true Hebrew, because he satisfied himself with living a life in God.

Orthos in Greek means "right," and *doxa* means "opinion." When a part of our brethren broke with the Jewish past and called themselves "Reformers," they named those who remained loyal "Orthodox." And for want of a better word in English we may use it to designate the genuine Jew, the man or woman who lives in strict accordance with Jewish law. Jewish law may be divided into two parts: the one concerning the relation between God and man, and the other the relation between man and his fellow man. These two actually are interdependent. He who truly appreciates the gifts of life and social factors will revere the Father of all life.

Judaism bids the Jew to aim at perfection in both these relationships, which are one in the Jewish law.

It tells the Jew to honor the Sabbath and to love Truth.

To observe the dietary laws and to be kind and sympathetic.

To lay *tefillin* and to do his share in the upbuilding of his country.

The Jewish Calendar ("Luach")

The Jewish year consists of twelve (in leap years thirteen) months, the length of which is determined by the duration of one revolution of the moon around the earth. The extra month of the leap year is called *Adar Sheni* (the second *Adar*). It serves to adjust the lunar to the solar year. In nineteen years the difference amounts to about seven months. Hence we have seven leap years in every cycle of nineteen years. The first day of the month is called *Rosh Chodesh* (beginning of the month) and is a half-holiday on which we read from the thanksgiving psalms called *Hallel* (Ps. cxiii-cxviii).

Jewish Holy Days and Festivals

The Jewish New Year, *Rosh Hashanah,* commences on the first of *Tishri.* It is devoted to a re-examination of our life and our moral balance of the past year, and to a return to the Jewish principles which are to guide our conduct in the following year. Associated with it is the *shofar* (the ram's horn), which, as in the wilderness, where it first sounded to our forefathers, calls upon us to assemble before God, to hearken to His commandments, and to decide upon the new way, the direction of which is indicated "by the ark of the covenant," His Torah.

On the tenth day of Tishri is *Yom Kippur,* the day on which we are to make our peace with God and man. Our sins have a twofold consequence. They involve punishment for us and they degrade our souls. They may come from unfair treatment of our fellow man or from negligence in performing

our duties toward God. We are to fast from sunset to sunset and to afflict ourselves because of our sins. We must make our peace with man before we can approach God for His pardon. We must undo every wrong we have done, replace anything of which we have robbed our fellow man. Only after we have righted, as far as possible, all wrongs, may we approach God and ask for re-at-one-ment. Our sins have removed us from Him, our repentance can bring us back to Him. Only when we are genuinely sorry for our shortcomings will God forgive us. We ask Him to be doubtly gracious to us, to forgive our iniquities and not to punish us, to wipe away the reproach of our sins with their evil influence upon our life, so that we may enter upon the duties of the new year with renewed hearts and purified minds.

Symbolic of our struggles are the two he-goats, which the portion of the law recalls. One of them was sacrificed unto God. It represents the forces in us which are dedicated to the performance of our God-given duties. The other was sent into the wilderness, indicating the uselessness of the godless life, which is harmful to human society.

Succoth, the Feast of the Tabernacles (from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of *Tishri*), primarily has historical associations. Before our forefathers entered the Holy Land, they dwelt in tents in the wilderness and yet, with a sense of God's protection, felt themselves safe from attack by wild Bedouins and beasts of prey. To-day we leave our apartments, even the steel safety of our skyscrapers, and live in a *succah* for eight days to express our trust

in God, the conviction that "If the Lord build not the house, they labor in vain, who build it; if the Lord watch not the city, the watchman watcheth in vain" (Ps. cxvii. 1, 2). With His protection we are safe in the frail hut; without it we are in danger in the most modern fortress. *Succoth,* in Palestine, was and is the harvest festival, a feast of gratitude; that is its second significance. *Lulav* (palm branch), *ethrog* (*citron*), myrtle, and willow are bound together in one cluster to show us the method of effecting constructive work in the new year. Coöperation implies tolerance. The *ethrog* represents beauty and usefulness, the willow has neither, the myrtle and *lulav* each have one of these qualities. Only by combining all elements of our people, and in the larger sense all humanity, can we advance human interest and find the way back to God.—*Hoshaanah Rabbah,* so-called because many prayers of that day begin with *Hoshaanah* (pray save!), has seven solemn processions of the whole congregation bearing the cluster.

Shemini Atzereth (on the twenty-second and twenty-third of *Tishri*), following *Succoth,* is the second high holiday, on which no manner of work may be performed. It ends with *Simchath Torah* (Rejoicing of the Law), on which day the reading of the Torah is completed and recommenced.

Succoth is the festival of happiness, of gratitude, of the expression of our trust in God, who will every year bestow upon us the harvest of goodly fruits.

The next month is *Cheshvan.*

The twenty-fifth of *Kislev* brings the feast of *Chanuccah* (Dedication), which lasts for eight days.

It recalls the great fight for freedom of conscience which the Maccabees won against the Syrian tyrants, who sought to rob us of our religion. The miracle of the cruse of oil, which, far beyond its measure, burned for eight days, symbolizes also the immortality of true ideals. Every Jew lights one light on the first, and each day thereafter an additional light, until the eighth day.

Teveth is the next month. The tenth is a national day of mourning recalling the siege of Jerusalem.

Shevat has a lovely feast. Its fifteenth day, *Chamish Asar,* is the New Year for trees. This day, primarily concerned with agricultural aspects of Jewish law, became in later days a symbol of the Jewish optimism which celebrates spring in the thick of winter.

On the fourteenth and fifteenth of *Adar* (in leap years the second *Adar*) we celebrate *Purim* (Feast of Lots), commemorating the deliverance of the Jews and the discomfiture of Haman, who plotted the destruction of Persian Jewry, but ended on the gallows. The Megillath Esther (the scroll of Esther), which is read twice, is its document.

Nisan, the political new year, from which the kings dated their reign, is the chief of the months of the year. On the fifteenth of Nisan we celebrate Passover (*Pesach*), "for that the Lord *passed over* the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when he smote the Egyptians" (Ex. xii. 27). On this festival we are to partake of no leaven (*chametz*), neither may it be seen or found in any Jewish house. We are thus to commemorate the deliverance

of the Jews, who left Egypt hurriedly and could bake only unleavened cakes (*matzoth*) for themselves.

The *Seder* nights, on the eve of the first and second day of Passover, are devoted to the Haggadah, the tale of the exodus from Egypt. They have come to be nights of family reunion, fully studded with beautiful customs reminiscent of our Egyptian experiences. The eating of *maror* (bitter herbs) and *matzah* is commanded as a symbol of the bitter hardships and the bread of affliction which our forefathers found in Egypt.

The months of *Nisan, Iyyar,* and *Sivan* are connected through the *Sefirah* (Counting). On the second night of Pesach we begin to count the seven weeks between Passover and Pentecost (*Shavuoth*). The fiftieth day (the sixth of *Sivan*) is the first day of *Shavuoth.* The *Sefirah* days connect the birthday of our bodily freedom with the birthday of our spiritual freedom. Passover recalls the freedom of our bodies, but in soul we were still slaves, with slavish souls, who remembered the fleshpots of Egypt and would fain sacrifice their freedom for them again. On Shavuoth the law was given to six hundred thousand Jews on Mount Sinai, and we became free in soul. For then we undertook the obligation of becoming a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. On the second day of *Shavuoth,* as on *Shemini Atzereth, Yom Kippur,* and on the last day of Passover, we remember the dead in a Memorial Service.

It is customary to distribute gifts to the poor and to needy institutions (*matnath yad*) on the eve of the Jewish holidays.

The Blessing of the Priests

On all holidays after the *Musaf* service, the priests (*Cohanim*) ascend the Ark to pronounce the blessing on the congregation. This service is omitted on any holiday that falls on the Sabbath, with the exception of *Yom Kippur*. The Torah states clearly what the function of the priests is. They but chant God's blessing upon the congregation. They do not bless Israel; they act as the mouthpiece of the Lord. It is a duty rather than a privilege for them to pronounce the words of the Torah, and it is obligatory upon every *Cohan* (descendant of Aaron the high priest) above the age of thirteen years (*Bar Mitzvah*) to be present and to take part in the service of the priests. The congregation stands with head bowed during that service, realizing that the blessing comes from God and not from the *Cohanim* who recite it.

The Three Weeks

The seventeenth of *Tammuz* recalls the breach made in the walls of Jerusalem, and with it commence the three weeks of national mourning, during which, both at the first and second destruction of the Temple, the defenses of the city of Jerusalem were stormed, and the populace murdered or sold into slavery. The three weeks end with the saddest day in the Jewish year, the fast of the ninth of *Av, Tisha Be 'Av,* on which the Holy Temple was burned. A great number of priests and of the people perished in the flames or were butchered by the conquerors. During the three weeks no marriages are celebrated and no joyous affairs are arranged.

The month of *Elul* prepares for the solemn days of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. Its last days are spent in much serious reflection, and our people arise an hour or two before sunrise and repair to the synagogue, where special penitential prayers (*Selichoth*) are said.

The Sabbaths as well as the festivals are to be kept by the Jew, both negatively and positively. Negatively, we are to abstain from all manner of work and business. The positive observance of the Sabbath and the festivals lies in the intensification of family life, in the opportunity an unworried mind gives to the study of our literature and history, in the contact it enjoins with the texts of our people and its religion. Thus the Sabbath day is a spiritual treasury of incalculable value. The law of the festival days permits us to perform such labors as are necessary for the preparation of the food we eat on those days. In this respect *Shabbos* and *Yom Kippur* have more severe laws forbidding all manner of work.

The Funeral

It is a Jewish duty to visit a sick person if such visit is likely to give comfort to the sufferer, the visit to be accompanied by prayer. It is a Jewish duty to remain with a dying person until his last moment. The funeral must be distinguished by utter simplicity. Every form of luxury, all resplendent coffins, robes for the dead other than the traditional white cerement, all floral tributes, are interdicted to Jews. At the open grave the next of kin, sons, brothers, and the father of the dead, recite the *Kaddish.*

The "Kaddish"

Kaddish is a holy pledge, not a prayer for the dead, but a promise of the living. It is recited for the first time at the open grave after the mound has been formed. There the Jew declares to the God of his fathers: "Lord God, hear my voice; at this moment I do not murmur against Thy decree. At this moment I know only one resolve. As my parent has lived for Thee, so shall my life be dedicated to the glory of Thy name. 'Yisgadal, veyiskaddash Shemeh rabbah'—'That Thy great name be magnified and sanctified'—is the program of my life for the future. Here do I undertake ever to be faithful to my duties as a Jew." The mourners rend their garments near the neck as a sign of their loss. This ceremony is to be performed standing. "The Jew must not allow anything to break him down; he must bear his loss with dignity." After the funeral, the mourners return to the home of their departed relative, there to sit *shivah* (the seven days of mourning). For thirty days after the burial, the mourners allow their hair to grow without cutting it. For eleven months after the day of burial, the *Kaddish* is recited in the synagogues morning and evening by the children of the deceased, and for twelve months they abstain from visiting places of amusement and from taking part in any festivity. For other relatives the period of mourning lasts thirty days.

Immortality

The following passages, among many others, express this fundamental Jewish creed:

I kill and I make alive (Deut. xxxii. 19). As

for me, I shall see thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with beholding thy likeness (Ps. xvii. 15). Thy dead shall live again. The mortal being shall rise to a new life (Is. xxvi. 19).

And the dust shall return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it (Eccles. xii, 17).

We know nothing but the bare fact that God can restore to life that which is dead and that a resurrection will take place.

All details are beyond our knowledge.

Our sages tell us that in the future world there will be neither eating nor drinking, but the wise will sit with spiritual crowns on their heads, enjoying the splendor of God's presence.

Maimonides has formulated this belief in the following manner: "I firmly believe that there will take place a revival of the dead at a time which will please the Creator, blessed be He."

Marriage

Marriage, in Hebrew, is called *kidushin* (sanctification). Judaism looks upon marriage as a thing sacred. The bride undergoes a ritual purification on the eve of the wedding. Both bride and groom come to the wedding chastened by fasting. The groom weds his bride by putting a ring on her finger and saying: "Behold, thou art consecrated to me by this ring according to the law of Moses and Israel." This ceremony must take place under a canopy, and it is not valid unless the groom, in the presence of two witnesses, has agreed and accepted the *ketubah* (the Hebrew marriage document) whereby he obliges himself to provide for his wife

and assure her a definite sum as an obligation on his estate. The gist of the *ketubah* is expressed in the words: "Become thou my wife according to the law of Moses and Israel, and I shall serve you, honor you, and provide for you according to the manner of Jewish husbands who serve, honor, and provide for their wives in truth." Seven blessings are recited during the ceremony and after the wedding. The breaking of the glass at the end of the ceremony with its dissonant tone is a reminder both of the destruction of the sanctuary in Jerusalem, and of the fact that even at the moment of supreme joy Jews, recognizing their social responsibility, must not forget that they belong to Israel, and must take part in its sorrows.

Jewish law excommunicates the polygamist. Yet, while it postulates the wife of one's youth as the ideal of domestic happiness for man, it does not consider marriage as a contract binding unto death. Where inevitable circumstances prevent a happy life of the partners, rabbis, after every attempt to heal the breach, will grant a divorce. The Jewish purity laws are a great factor in making Jewish home life a blessing and an impregnable fortress of our people. Where these laws have been transgressed, deterioration and decay soon set in.

"Shechitah"

One of the Jewish laws that has been subject to much malevolent attack is that of the ritual slaughtering of cattle and fowl, known as *shechitah*. Yet this has been acclaimed by many Gentile scientists as the most humane method of killing an animal.

It combines absolute painlessness with great rapidity, thus rendering the animal unconscious before it can feel the pain inflicted by a very sharp knife. Only strong and expert men are admitted as shochetim and they are subjected to a most stringent examination which guarantees their skill in killing quickly and painlessly. The meat of an animal killed by *shechitah* is more thoroughly drained of blood than by any other method of killing, and is therefore more healthful than any other meat and more suited for human consumption.

The Dietary Laws

We know very little about the influence of food on the brain. God, who has created us, knows our nature, and His wisdom has decreed these laws. The Torah states that their purpose is sanctification. "For I am the Lord your God; sanctify yourselves therefore and be ye holy; for I am holy" (Lev. xi. 44).

The dietary laws especially regulate our animal food. We may eat only the meat of an animal killed by *shechitah* (except fish, which is not subject to it). *Trefah* designates all forbidden food. It means "torn," but it can almost be translated as "abnormal." All permitted good is called *kasher,* which means "right," "proper," "fit."

All blood except that of fish is prohibited. "Only be steadfast in not eating the blood; for the blood is the life; and thou shalt not eat the life with the flesh" (Deut. xii. 23). With regard to cattle and beasts the law reads: "Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is wholly clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud,

amongst the beasts, that may ye eat." A number of birds are traditionally known as *kasher*. Fish that have scales and fins are permitted (Lev. xi. 9). Worms, snails, lobsters, crabs, "and every swarming thing that swarmeth upon the earth is a detestable thing; it shall not be eaten" (Lev. xi. 41). All mixture of milk and meat—*bassar bechalav*—is forbidden (Ex. xxiv. 19). The flesh of fish is not considered meat in this respect.

Judaism, National and Universal

Judaism is a national religion in that it is the religion which God has given to Israel. According to the Torah He has chosen us as His peculiar people, to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. But Judaism is also universal, for that very title, "Kingdom of Priests," shows that, as a priest of old, so should the whole nation be an example unto the Gentile world of a life lived in God—upright, just, and kind. Our rabbis tell us that Judaism is the salvation only of the Jew; that the righteous men of other religions will also partake of eternal salvation. In this respect, too, Judaism, the mother of all monotheistic religions, is most tolerant, for it is the only religion which does not claim a monopoly of all kinds of grace.

One of the fundamental beliefs of the Jew, and perhaps the secret of his deathless optimism, is the belief in the millennium, the time of the Messiah, a great man of the house of David who will redeem his people and cause the nations to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Palestine and the Messianic Time

Eretz Israel is the land of the Jewish past and the Jewish future.

But in the end of days it shall come to pass
That the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the top of the mountains,
And it shall be exalted above the hills:
And peoples shall flow into it.
And many nations shall go and say,
Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.
And to the house of the God of Jacob;
And He will teach us of His ways,
And we will walk in His paths:
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
And He shall judge between many peoples,
And shall decide concerning mighty nations afar off;
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks:
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more.
But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree;
And none shall make them afraid:
For the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.
(Micah iv. 1-5.)

Belief in the essential goodness of human nature will develop as the nations of the earth abandon the evil of greed and tyranny and embrace the great ideal of the brotherhood of man, based upon the fatherhood of God.

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II

JUDAISM IN JEWISH HISTORY

BY

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II

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The Riddle of History

The history of Israel, both ancient and modern, differs from all other histories. It extends back into the mists of the past and is continuous down to the present day. It covers the entire period of human history as it is known to us. But for only a few centuries during those thousands of years did the people of Israel reside in a land of its own and have control of its national affairs. During the greater part of its existence, they have been scattered among the nations and struggling frantically against overwhelming odds to resist utter destruction, and driven from land to land by pitiless persecution, and plundered and massacred by fiendish mobs.

The annals of Israel tell no story of imperial pomp and military conquest. The rich scenes associated with the Oriental courts are all but foreign to the land of Judea. It is a poor history, judged by the standards of nations who have built up vast empires and made the heavens ring with their fame. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome—not to speak of the Middle Ages—each held the center of the stage in its day; but only in its day. They had all alike built on shifting foundations; and they

collapsed one after the other, so that they are now only a memory.

Israel, on the other hand, survived them all, looked on at their struggle to the heights and beheld their downfall. Like them, Israel passed through times of crisis. Its land was overrun by invaders, just as theirs had been; its kings, like theirs, had been flung from the throne; its independence, the same as theirs, had been lost; its populations had shared with theirs the bitterness of captivity. Yet Israel lived, whereas the other peoples perished. Why?

The Solution of the Riddle

Let us state at once what the true answer to this question is, and then proceed to the demonstration of its correctness. The fate of Israel was other than that of all other peoples of antiquity, because its fundamental constitution was different. The nation of Israel, alone of all nations, did not depend for its existence upon the possession of territory or political freedom, but upon Torah. It was Torah which brought the Israelite nation into being; it is Torah which has kept it in being. There is the explanation of the uniqueness of Jewish history and the secret of Jewish survival.

The Origin of Israel

The most populous of nations trace their beginnings from one founder—sometimes historical, sometimes mythical. The Hebrews originated from the patriarch Abraham. Not only do the narratives of Genesis tell us this explicitly, but from the literature of the prophets we learn that he was regarded

as the father of the race. Israel is called "the seed of Abraham, My friend" (Is. xli. 8). "Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged. Look unto Abraham, your father" (Is. li, 1f.), was the divine exhortation.

It is noteworthy that the career of the first patriarch opens with a command to him from God and his ready obedience (Gen. xii. 1). The Almighty issued to him a certain direction (in Hebrew, Torah), and his willingness to follow that direction earned for him the privilege of founding a race which would become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." This characteristic was to be the distinguishing feature which marked off him and his descendants from the rest of mankind. Thus God declared: "For I have known him (Abraham), to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that he may keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, to the end that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him" (Gen. xviii. 19).

We find the verification of this characteristic in the next two generations. Of Abraham's children, only Isaac was worthy of becoming his heir, because he alone continued in the spiritual life of his father. He was Abraham's disciple, as well as his son; and so he was designated the next link in the chain. Similarly, Isaac had two sons; but the heritage passed into the hands of one of them, Jacob. The other, Esau, was not a Hebrew, because he rejected the spiritual teachings of his father and grandfather.

We notice, then, that far back, in the very infancy

of the race, a peculiarity is discernible. What we may term "religion" plays a dominant part and outweighs even the claims of physical kinship. And this religious element is the golden thread which links together all the epochs of Israel's history. Because that thread has held and never been cut asunder, Israel still lives.

Israel's Charter

A people requires a charter to govern its existence, and Israel received its charter when the people stood trembling at the foot of Mount Sinai and heard the voice of God proclaiming His will. That was the first great crisis through which they passed. Their fate was hanging in the balance on that day. Had they not exclaimed, "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do" (Ex. xix. 8), the world would never have heard of the name of Israel. Its story would have resembled the many streams to be found in the East, which flow a short distance and disappear in the sands.

The Rabbis have driven home this moral by declaring that, when the Israelites thronged around Sinai, God lifted the mountain over them and said, "If you accept My Torah, well and good; but if not, here shall be your grave." This is no exaggeration. What alone saved the Israelites, after their release from Egypt, from splitting up into tiny fragments and being swallowed by the surrounding peoples was this possession which they held in common. The Torah was, as it were, the cement which made them adhere and gave them strength.

This great truth is the theme of the last of the

Five Books of Moses. With untiring repetition, Moses impressed upon his hearers before his death that faithfulness to the Torah was the essential qualification for their continued existence. Disloyalty to its precepts would result in destruction. To emphasize in the strongest possible manner the importance of this lesson, a Covenant was drawn up between God and the people: "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be Thy God, and that thou wouldst walk in His ways, and keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His ordinances, and hearken unto His voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His own treasure, as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all His commandments; and to make thee high above all nations that He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in glory; and that thou mayest be a holy people unto the Lord thy God, as He hath spoken" (Deut. xxvi. 17ff.).

The terms of this Covenant having been ratified, we get the crowning declaration: "This day thou art become a people unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. xxvii. 9). The meaning of all this must be apparent. The basis upon which the life of the Israelite people was founded was not a political constitution, but a religious charter—the Torah.

The Two Kingdoms

The all-important place which religion held in the national life was demonstrated most vividly by the fate of the two kingdoms into which the people of Israel split after the death of Solomon. There was the Kingdom of Israel in the North, consisting

of ten tribes, with its capital in Samaria; and there was the Kingdom of Judah, comprising the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and the majority of the priests and Levites, with Jerusalem as the metropolis.

Both kingdoms suffered invasion and the exile of their inhabitants; but with different consequences. In 721 B.C.E., the Assyrians crushed the Northern Kingdom and carried the greater part of the population away into captivity. There they disappeared. They utterly vanished from the pages of our history. They are the "lost ten tribes."

In 586 B.C.E., the Babylonians overran the Southern Kingdom, reduced the Temple and Holy City to ruins, and led the largest part of the population as captives to Babylon. Only a handful of the poor were left behind. But the exiles in Babylon did not perish. They lived on to preserve the Jewish name and to continue Jewish history. Why this difference?

To the question why the Jews in Babylon escaped the fate of their brethren in Assyria, history gives us the answer. The former must have possessed a preserving agency which the other lacked. What that life-sustaining influence was can be deduced with certainty. For in the following century there came into prominence one of the outstanding personalities in our history, viz. Ezra. He was born in Babylon and reared there. The Bible gives him the title of *Sopher,* "Scribe," i. e. an expert in the science of the Torah. Love for the Torah was the ruling passion of his life. His knowledge and zeal were the consequence of his upbringing; so he is

convincing proof that some at least of the Jews of Babylon were devoted to the study and practice of the Torah.

Scholars are agreed that the *beth ha-keneseth,* "the house of assembly" (or synagogue, to use the Greek term), originated in the Babylonian captivity. The purpose of the *beth ha-keneseth* was not primarily for prayer, but for the reading and exposition of God's revelation. The exiles met periodically to study the Torah and in this way lived as Jews, although they were uprooted from the Holy Land. Some thousands of them returned to Judea later on, but the majority stayed behind. Despite the fact that they were dwelling in a heathen environment, they remained staunch Jews. The Torah, to which they were ardently attached, proved an effective breakwater against the waves of assimilation that dashed against them. With that spiritual force in their midst, they were indestructible. And centuries later, from Babylon, came a Hillel to teach Torah to the scholars of Judea; and in Babylon were the famous schools of learning which produced the Babylonian Talmud.

The Israelites in Assyria, lacking this vivifying force, succumbed very quickly and were completely assimilated among their neighbors.

The New Judea

Experience, then, proved that Jews could preserve their identity in a foreign land without fear of extermination, so long as they were loyal to the Torah. The history of that period taught the equally important lesson that Jews could not be

secure against extinction, though residing in the Holy Land, when they abandoned the Torah.

In the year 536 B.C.E., Cyrus, king of Persia, having gained a decisive victory over the Babylonians, issued an edict permitting the Jews to return to their motherland. A band of zealous pioneers set out to rebuild the national home and revive the national life. They were doubtless inspired by the loftiest idealism; but within the space of a single century the Jews in Judea were in a desperate plight. All that the Israelites had stood for during the ages was on the point of perishing. Intermarriage and treachery to the Torah had played havoc with the new Jewish settlement.

The Book of Nehemiah throws a vivid light on the corrupt conditions then prevailing. How illuminating is the following statement: "In those days also saw I the Jews that had married women of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab; and their children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people" (xiii. 23f).

Is it not clear from these words, that only a miracle could avert the destruction of Jewry in Judea? The miracle happened; and the divinely appointed agent was Ezra, the Jew from Babylon. A modern scholar has written, "If Ezra had not come, it is conceivable, and indeed, highly probable, that Judaism would have disappeared altogether." [1] He visited the Holy Land and conducted a fiery mission throughout the community. He caused the mixed marriages to be dissolved and made the Torah bind-

[1] R. T. Herford, *Pharisaism*, p. 9.

ing upon the people. As the result of his activity, Judaism became the central force of the national life; and it worked an extraordinary transformation.

There is a gap in the Jewish records from the middle of the fifth century to the end of the third; but when one compares what lies behind and in front of this gap the contrast is startling. On the one side, there is a community sick unto death, weakened in body and spirit, being nursed slowly back to health by the wise attention of Ezra and his disciples. On the other side, we find the Jews displaying unparalleled heroism in a struggle to maintain their religious liberty, some of them even refusing to bear arms on the Sabbath and allowing themselves to be struck down without resistance rather than desecrate the holy day. That the Jews of the Holy Land did not perish in those intermediate centuries, but instead produced the glorious Maccabees, is due to one fact only—the inspiring influence of the Torah.

The Maccabean Struggle

This wonderful fight against apparently hopeless odds is likewise instructive for our purpose. All the world honors the brave Hasmoneans; and all schools of Jewish religious thought attack value to the celebration which commemorates their victory. An advanced Jewish Reform teacher, C. G. Montefiore, has written: "That Festival (viz. *Chanukah*) celebrates . . . the preservation of the Jewish religion at a season of the utmost peril." These words should be carefully noted. It is explicitly declared that the Jewish religion was in the direst peril; it was in danger of being destroyed, and was preserved by the

heroism of the Maccabean martyrs and warriors. If this be true—and who could dispute it?—we shall see that most important inferences are to be drawn.

How did the Syrian tyrant seek to accomplish his purpose? How was his design frustrated? When these questions have been answered we shall surely have discovered upon what the existence of the Jewish religion and people depends, since it is universally agreed that had Antiochus succeeded in his plan, Judaism, and therefore Jewry, would have perished. He did not issue an edict to the effect that no Jew was henceforward to believe in the existence of God, or the unity of God, or the value of righteousness. He was entirely unconcerned with the theological opinions of the Jews. His concern was political. Jewish religious practice formed the impenetrable barrier which withheld the Jews from assimilation with the remainder of the Syrian Empire.

To destroy Judaism, he shrewdly determined to destroy everything that marked the Jewish people as distinct from their neighbors. He aimed his blows at the Jewish customs and observances, for he was certain that when these differences had been obliterated the Jews as a separate entity would disappear.

Our principal source of information with reference to this period is the Books of the Maccabees in the Apocrypha. In the opening chapter we are given the account of the attempt to annihilate Judaism, from which we gather that Antiochus directed himself especially against four Jewish rites. The first was the Service in the Temple. That

Service was so characteristically Jewish, so unlike the worship in the heathen sanctuaries, that it proved a powerful factor in preserving the distinctiveness of the Jews. We are informed that the party of Jews who aided the king in his effort to assimilate Jewry "built a place of worship at Jerusalem according to the customs of the heathen" (verse 14). When the Jews would have been induced to worship according to the customs of their neighbors, and not according to the customs of their fathers, one obstacle in the way of absorption would have been removed. (2) The tyrant sent officers throughout the land to see "that they (the Jews) should profane the Sabbath and festival days" (verse 45), thus aiming to remove another safeguard against loss of identity. (3) "That they should also leave their children uncircumcised" (verse 48), for the abolition of this rite would make assimilation a much easier matter. (4) "And make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation" (ibid.), by which is to be understood the violation of the dietary laws and those of purity. And the explicit purpose of the campaign was "to the end they might forget the Law, and change all the ordinances" (verse 49).

The importance of this incident consists in that it reveals what were regarded as the four props upon which the structure of Judaism rested. As early as the second century B.C.E., in the pre-Rabbinic period, it was understood that the Jewish religion was not simply a combination of spiritual idealism and morality; it included a distinctive form of worship and ceremonial. These rites were perceived by

friend and foe alike, to be the supports of Judaism, the removal of which would cause the collapse of the superstructure. If, then, it be true that the victory of the Hasmoneans saved the Jewish people from destruction, one may rightly say that the preservation of the Jew is bound up with the maintenance of a specifically Jewish mode of worship, the hallowing of the Sabbath and festivals, and the observance of such institutions as circumcision, the dietary laws, and the laws regarding purity.

The Supreme Crisis

We come now to the severest testing-time in our history, the first century of the present era, when the Temple was burnt by the Romans and the State destroyed. Here was a catastrophe which surely ought to have sounded the death knell of the Jews. The slaughter had been terrific. Josephus[2] informs us that 1,100,000 men perished in the course of the siege, and 97,000 were taken captive.

How is it that the Jew did not disappear from the face of the earth? His home land was gone; all the externalities of Jewish national life had been stripped away; wherever he henceforth resided, his people were an insignificant minority. Why, then, did the Jews form the solitary exception to the law which pronounces death upon a nation in such circumstances?

The true answer is that the Jews did not come under this law because their national being was radically different from that of the other peoples.

[2] *Wars* vi. 9. 3.

The Romans did not pierce the vital organ of Jewry when they broke up the State in Judea. The political constitution, under which the Jews lived, proved to be no essential part of their existence. What was vital to their preservation was the ancient Charter delivered to them at Sinai, and that remained intact despite the Roman legions.

The story is well known how Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai secured from Vespasian a concession whereby the village of Jabneh was spared from destruction and founded there a school of learning. This school has become famous as the "Vineyard of Jabneh." It is truly named; for it yielded a wine-tonic which brought vitality and vigor and hope to the stricken remnant. The life-blood began to pulsate once more in the veins of the Jewish body, as a stream of earnest disciples passed through the College of Torah at Jabneh. The community grew stronger, so strong in fact that the aspiration to break the Roman yoke and regain freedom for the Holy Land from the invader began to stir many a heart.

The spies of the Roman Government reported this revival of national hope; and in their alarm the authorities resolved to obliterate every trace of Jewishness in Judea. With that end in view, they forbade the teaching of the Torah under the penalty of death. Tradition relates that the teachers fled with their pupils to the hills, and living in caves under the greatest privation continued their instruction. They knew full well that discovery meant a painful martyrdom and were prepared to pay the price. Large numbers actually paid it, so that the more

timorous of the leaders advised submission to the Roman edict.

But they were silenced by the heroic Rabbi Akiba. He convinced them of their error with a parable which cannot be too often quoted: A fox was walking along the bank of a stream and saw the fishes moving about in panic. "From what are you fleeing?" he asked them; and they answered, "From nets in which men are trying to catch us." He said to them, "Let me give you advice. Come up on to the dry land, and let us dwell together in safety." The fishes retorted, "Art thou he of whom they tell that thou art the shrewdest of animals? Thou art not clever but a fool! For if we are in danger here, in our life-element, how much greater will our danger be in a place which is our death-element!" Said Rabbi Akiba: "Of the study of the Torah it is written 'For that is thy life and the length of thy days' (Deut. xxx. 20). While we cling to that, we have a chance of life; let us abandon it, and death is certain."

The Final Struggle

The burden of Roman rule grew intolerable, and under Bar Kochba the Jews made a supreme effort to free themselves. The forlorn attempt failed, although it was waged with a frenzied zeal born of desperation. The crushing defeat occurred at Bethar in 135 C.E., when the Romans determined to leave nothing to chance. The work of annihilation would be thorough this time. "Horses were said to wade to the nozzle in blood—a river of blood flowed into the distant sea, carrying bodies along with it.

One can scarcely credit the numbers said to have been slain, and yet they are confirmed both by Jewish and by Greek historians. The authentic historian Dio Cassius relates that besides those who died of hunger and fire, there fell half a million Jews." [3]

From that direful day to the present, the Jew has been a homeless wanderer over the face of the earth, finding a temporary resting place, but soon driven by merciless persecution to move on. Exposed to unceasing pressure to forsake the faith of his fathers, offered tempting allurements to embrace the dominant religion, he resisted them both. The steadfastness of the Jew during these centuries of bitterness has excited the admiration and wonder of the world. "What nation," asked Macaulay in the British House of Commons, when pleading for Jewish emancipation, "ever contended more manfully against overwhelming odds for its independence and religion? What nation ever, in its last agonies, gave such signal proofs of what may be accomplished by a brave despair?"

The Miracle of History

Chief Rabbi Dr. Hertz, in his *Book of Jewish Thoughts,* has this noteworthy extract from a fourth-century Church Father, Jerome:

> The destruction of the Holy City, the ruin of the House of God, the dispersion of the Chosen People into all the kingdoms of the earth, and their continued existence as a nation, notwithstanding every attempt to exterminate them or to compel them to

[3] Graetz.

> forsake those ordinances which distinguish them to this very day from all other nations, is emphatically one of the strongest evidences we can have of the truth of the Bible. Jerusalem was indeed once a great city, and the Temple magnifical; but the Jews themselves were greater than either; hence, while the two former have been given over to spoliation, the latter have been wonderfully, miraculously, preserved. The annals of the world do not contain anything so remarkable in human experience, so greatly surpassing human power and human prescience. Exiled and dispersed, reviled and persecuted, oppressed and suffering, often denied the commonest rights of humanity, and still more often made the victim of ruthless fanaticism and bigoted prejudice, the Jews are divinely preserved for a purpose worthy of a God!

If this eloquent passage was true in the fourth century, how intensified has its truth become during the intervening centuries! What, however, is the explanation? What is the real secret of the Jews' survival during those dark centuries of inhuman treatment?

The Source of Jewish Vitality

According to the statement of Jerome, the Jews were "divinely preserved." If this be taken to mean that they continued in existence solely by the will of God, it expresses but a half-truth. They played their own part, and a noble part too, in preserving their nationality. Many of them, it is true, fell away. They succumbed to the force of persecution and preferred life with dishonor to the martyr's

death. Others yielded to the temptation of honors and riches and rest from harrowing experiences, and sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. Those who continued unshakably loyal did so because Judaism was more precious to them than all else, than life itself. Individuals deserted the ranks, but the army of Israel rallied round the time-honored standard and faced a hostile world with undaunted courage.

Whence was this courage derived? As always in the past, from the Torah. The final collapse of all hopes of a resurrected state in Judea led to the concentration of the energies of the Jewish people upon the systematic study of the divine revelation. It became the aim and goal of their activities. To dig down into the mines of the Torah and bring up its treasures, to unfold its deepest thoughts and apply them to their vicissitudes, to draw life-giving encouragement from the inspired visions of the prophets—these occupations filled the mind and the heart of the harassed Jew to such a degree that he could for a time forget the misery of his material lot. His spiritual treasures were his delight and his compensation. Confined to the filthy Ghetto and cut off from the recreations of the outside world, he pored over Talmud and Midrash, reveled in the new commentaries which enlightened the dark places in the Scriptures, and exercised his mind and soul with the marvels of the Torah. In the dingy building which was both house of prayer and house of study, he passed happy hours in communion with his God. His poverty-stricken home was illumined by the radiance of his religion. On the Sabbath and

on festivals when his hovel was transformed by the spirit of Judaism into a miniature sanctuary, he did not envy the palatial residence of the wealthy Gentile. The world despised the Jew; but the Jew felt himself the superior of his persecutors. His values were different from theirs, but his were truer because they had God's approval.

Thus the influence of Judaism gave the Jewish people the will to withstand attacks of every kind, whether the brutal massacre of the mob or the more subtle onslaught of the Church which sought to entice the "infidel" into its fold by any means. Who can deny, then, in the face of overwhelming historical evidence extending over a period of nearly five thousand years, that Judaism, and Judaism alone, was the sole agency which saved the people from extermination?

The Moral for the Future

Experientia docet. There is no more reliable teacher than past experience. Theories must give way to facts, and the meaning of the facts presented by the study of Jewish history is unmistakable. We learn therefrom: (1) The Jewish people is unique because the common bond has always been Judaism. Religion is so interwoven with race that they cannot be separated one from the other. Eliminate the religion, and the race must fall to pieces. The late Professor Schechter has well summarized this lesson in the following words:

> We must also remember that Israel is not a nation in the common sense of the word. To the Rabbis, at least, Israel is not a nation by virtue of race or

of certain peculiar political combinations. As Rabbi Saadya expressed it: "Our nation is a nation only by reason of its Torah." The brutal Torah-less nationalism promulgated in certain quarters would have been to the Rabbis just as hateful as the suicidal Torah-less universalism preached in other quarters. And if we could imagine for a moment Israel giving up its allegiance to God, its Torah and its divine institutions, the Rabbis would be the first to sign its death-warrant as a nation.[4]

(2) By Judaism is not to be understood a colorless theism, emptied of all specific content. A religion of this nondescript type could not have possessed the power of defying the human law of gravitation according to which minorities tend to move toward majorities and become merged in them. It is the Judaism which is not only a creed but also a life, which seeks to influence its adherents every day in the week and every hour in the day, at home and abroad—the Judaism which is a constant and unfailing reminder to the Jew of his Jewishness—that saved him from obliteration.

This vital truth is recognized even by scholars who are not identified with traditional Judaism. Ruppin, for example, declares:

> Had the isolation of the Jewish nation been based only on the strength of the faith (in Israel's God), it would not have survived the centuries, for theoretical ideas are apt to become weakened and changed in the course of time. On the other hand, traditional laws and customs of daily life have a strong hold and endure even when the idea which

[4] *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, pp. 105f.

they express has long ago been forgotten or discredited.[5]

It is to-day as it has always been in the past: the Jews must remain a people apart or disappear through assimilation; and the apartness which prevents dissolution among the nations can be secured only by the distinctive, time-honored ceremonies which are an integral constituent of Judaism.

A Midrashic Parable

It is related (Yalkut, Ekeb, § 871) that an exceedingly old woman came to a certain Rabbi and said to him, "I am already too old, and henceforth my life will be a burden to me. I want to die; how can I find death?" The Rabbi thereupon asked her, "By what means hast thou been able to reach thine advanced age?" She replied, "I am well learned in the Torah; moreover, even if I am engaged upon something which is most dear to me, I leave it and hasten early to the synagogue every day." On hearing this, he said to her, "Withhold thyself from the synagogue for three days consecutively." She did so; and on the third day she died.

Obviously we have here a parable. The old woman typifies the *Keneseth Yisrael*, the "Community of Israel," privileged to grow old through attachment to the Torah and the synagogue. Should Israel desire to be rid of the burden of age, the way of death is simple and speedy—neglect of the synagogue and abandonment of the Torah.

[5] *The Jews of To-day*, p. 140.

III

STUDY AS A MODE OF WORSHIP

BY

PROFESSOR NATHAN ISAACS

III

STUDY AS A MODE OF WORSHIP

Varieties of Worship

The ancient world knew many ways of expressing man's devotion to his God or his idol: fasting and feasting, abstinence and orgies, caressing and pelting with stones, magic (the attempt to control supernatural forces against their will) and divination (the attempt to learn the inescapable will of these forces in order to submit to it gracefully), bedecking the object of worship and defiling it, inciting the worshiper to a frenzy and lulling him into a stupor, treating the higher power as taboo to be kept away, or totem to be kept near, singing and weeping, dancing and lamenting, anointing one's body with oil and disfiguring it, riotous games and quiet prayers, seeking favor by faith and seeking favor by works. Enough of contrasts; one can easily understand the Talmudic allusions to technical acts of idolatry in which the worshiper has no intent to worship. The ten thousand cults differed not only in what they thought ought to be done, but in their prescribed ways for doing these things. There is a story to the effect that Pharaoh's daughter imported a thousand musical instruments and demonstrated to King Solomon the particular

use of each in some idolatrous cult. The symbolic acts and gestures range all the way from the whirling of a dervish to a simple bowing or bending of the knee. The places chosen for these acts were individual hearths or public heaths, groves or high places, grottoes or crossroads, deserts or river valleys, where they erected altars or pillars or shrines or temples or planted sacred trees. They burned incense, poured out libations of wine, sacrificed plants, animals, enemies, friends, children, themselves. They devoted valued things and chosen persons to the uses of religion. They treated the animals or heavenly bodies or other objects or images that they looked upon as symbols or embodiments or the very beings of their divinities, more or less as if they were human, setting tables before them, bargaining with them, and sometimes cheating them in the bargain. Occasionally they played off one power against another. At other times they cowered before them, showing deepest contrition, making confessions of all their sins, uttering fearful vows and doing horrible penance. Israel had to be warned not only against the worship of strange gods, but against strange worship of the true God: "Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord, thy God; for every abomination to the Lord, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters do they burn in the fire to their gods" (Deut. xii. 31).

Talmud Torah as "'Abodah" or Worship

Among the carefully selected methods that were open to Jews, there was one, perhaps the most im-

portant one, that seems to have been unknown among the Gentiles. It is the *mitzvah* of Talmud Torah. The study of the Law is not merely a means to an end; it is in itself a highly meritorious act and a mode of worship. That this notion had its origin in Judaism and that it has served the needs of Jews and Judaism peculiarly well are propositions more likely to be overlooked than controverted. It was controversy, however, that first caused them to be articulately put forth with scientific apparatus. One hundred years ago grave doubts were expressed within Jewry and outside of it as to whether the sermon was an element of *Gottesdienst*. Zunz, in his defense of the institution, clearly saw that its sole claim to recognition was its historic connection with the reading of the Law as a synagogue function.[1] Quite appropriately in a Zunz Memorial lecture a few years ago Professor George Foot Moore declared that he recognized in the Rabbinic zeal for learning a true religious enthusiasm. "This conception of individual and collective study," said he, "as a form of divine service has persisted in Judaism through all ages, and has made not only the learned by profession but men of humble callings in life assiduous students of the Talmud as the pursuit of the highest branch of religious learning and the most meritorious of good works." [2] It is the purpose of the present study to

[1] We have been hearing in recent days as a result of the *Kulturkampf* that has been waged in certain countries since the war, that there is a distinction between freedom in education and freedom in worship. A Zunz is needed to demonstrate to these countries that with us, at least, education *is* worship: Torah is *'Abodah*.

[2] *Menorah Journal*, viii, p. 6.

examine this aspect of Judaism both in theory and in practice, and then to suggest, if not to answer, some psychological questions connected with this variety of religious experience.

Three Aspects

There are three senses in which Torah study may be referred to as a method of worship among the Jews. In the first place it is, of course, reckoned as a *mitzvah,* and a *mitzvah* of such importance that its regular performance is to be assumed by incorporation into the daily ritual. In the second place Torah study ranks as worship even in the narrowest sense because it takes the place, according to Jewish doctrine, of the altar service of old. Finally in a much more significant sense Torah study is worship because it brings the Jew and his God into closer contact. It is the direct course leading to *Da'at Elohim,* "knowledge of God," which is the nearest Hebrew equivalent of "religion." To each of these senses of the word "worship"—the obvious, the narrow, and the broad—and the place of Torah study in connection with it we shall devote a section, but the sections will be of very uneven length and fullness.

1. *The Greatest Mitzvah Incorporated in the Liturgy*

First, then, let us consider the Biblical commands and their interpretation and application, including the incorporation of particular acts of study in the liturgy. The Biblical commands are found chiefly in Deuteronomy:

Make them known unto thy children and thy children's children (iv. 8): "And the words which I command thee this day shall be upon thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children and shalt talk of them when thou walkest by the way and when thou liest down and when thou risest up" (vi. 6);

When thy son asketh thee in time to come saying: "What mean the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord, our God, hath commanded you?" then shalt thou say unto thy son: "We were bondsmen . . . and the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes" (vi. 20-25);

And ye shall teach them your children, talking of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up (xi. 19);

And Moses commanded them (the priests and elders) saying: "At the end of every seven years, in the set time of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which He shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children, who have not known, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over the Jordan to possess it" (xxxi. 10-13).

Closely related to the idea of learning and teaching are those sentences which prescribe the publication of the laws, the writing of them and the use

of devices calculated to keep the people reminded of them, to keep them, so to speak, constantly at hand and before the eyes (Dut. vi. 8, 9; xi. 18-20; xvii. 18-20; xx. 12; xxvii. 1-4, 8; Num. xv. 37-41).

Most of these passages are, as indicated, from Deuteronomy. The idea is by no means absent from other parts of the Pentateuch; in Exodus, for example, there are three passages about the teaching of sons quite parallel to the one quoted above, and constituting with it the material for the theme of the Four Sons in the Passover Haggadah (xii. 26; xiii. 8; xiii. 14). But the Book of Deuteronomy is such a remarkable unit that to understand the passages taken from it, one should attempt to see them in the setting disclosed by a *coup d'oeil* of the whole work. Deuteronomy consists of four orations, a song, and the blessing of Moses, with a code of laws inserted between the second and the third oration. The code is the thing talked about or sung about in all of the other parts of the book. It is the document referred to when the other parts speak of "these words which I command thee this day" or "the statutes and the ordinances which I command thee this day," or when they use similar expressions. Furthermore the four orations represent four different approaches to this code that correspond pretty closely with four types of jurisprudence that have their uses even to-day: historical, analytical, social, and ethical. The first oration (i. 6-iv. 40) is an historical introduction that warms up to an admonition "lest thou forget the things which thine eyes saw" and an appeal to the Israelites in the name of history to appreciate their law, which is destined

to constitute their wisdom and their understanding in the sight of the peoples: "Ask now of the days past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth and from the one end of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it. Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" The second oration (v. 8-xi. 32) is analytical in the sense that it calls attention to underlying principles. It contains the Ten Commandments, the *Shema'*, and the grand summary: "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; to keep for thy good the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day?" The code, including a group of laws cast into the impressive form of a curse, occupies sixteen chapters (xii-xxvii). The third oration is a plea on social and political grounds (xxviii) in which obedience to the Law is pointed out as the road to public welfare and disobedience as the road to national ruin. It contains the great *tokahah* or admonition. The fourth oration (xxix. 1-xxxi. 8) represents an approach to the Law through individual ethics. It is the beginning of individual religion: "Ye are standing this day all of you before the Lord your God, your heads, your tribes, your elders and your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in the midst of thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water."

More than this, he that standeth here this day and also he that is not here with us this day is included.

From this outline it is clear that the passages on Talmud Torah are not a part of the code; they are its frame. They are not ordinary precepts, but something that stands out against the whole of the law, coördinate with all the rest of it put together. The outline may serve further to correct a very superficial view that comes from learning out of the siddur instead of out of the Torah. When the lawgiver says "these words, I command thee this day" and "my commandments which I command you this day," in two passages known to every Jew, he is not referring to any formula. It is the whole code, the *mishneh ha-torah,* that "shall be upon thine heart," that "thou shalt teach diligently unto thy children," that "thou shalt talk of when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." In fact the simple sense of the text is not satisfied unless the whole code is represented in the sign upon the hand, the frontlets between the eyes, on the doorposts of the homes and at the city gates. The actual Jewish practice of writing the words "And thou shalt write them" instead of the code itself in these places requires some explanation. Otherwise it may strike one as it would to approach an American city and encounter a signpost with such words as these: "Notice: It has been ordained by the Selectmen of the Town of Blank that the speed regulations of the Town be posted in a conspicuous place on every avenue of approach to the Town."

Just this, and not a word to tell us whether the speed limit of that town was eight or ten or fifteen or twenty miles an hour. There is a simple explanation of the Jewish practice, namely, that our posting an ordinance, with its command to teach and to teach again, to talk of and to publish and to keep before the mind and ready at hand the whole of the Law, embodies the commandment of Talmud Torah, which is the equivalent of all the other commandments put together. Of course, it is—so long as it is obeyed. Otherwise we are posting the posting ordinance instead of the matter ordered to be posted.

Throughout Jewish history the ordinances as to learning and teaching the Law have been taken to heart. The minutiae of their observance, such questions as who must be taught (Kiddushin, 30, sons and grandsons); who may be taught (Sotah, 2; cf. Maimonides, Hilkot T.T., on the teaching of daughters [3]) and who may not be taught (Makkot, 10; Ketubot, 28; Hagigah, 13, as to non-Jews); and who shall do the teaching (Berakot, 28, as to *minim;* the

[3] The doubt raised as to the teaching of the Torah to women is difficult to comprehend when we remember that Moses (see Deut. xxix. 10 and xxxi. 12) and Ezra (Neh. viii. 2) so specifically included the women in the ceremony of hearing the public readings from the Law. The notion that the woman must not learn by means of the public teaching is more in accord with the attitude of New Testament times than that of the times reflected in the Jewish Bible. Thus Paul writes: "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (I Cor. xiv. 34, 35). His reference to "the law" is rather vague. Does he allude to the curse of Eve (Gen. iii. 16) or to the law of Ahasuerus "that every man should bear rule in his own house" (Esther i. 22)?

medieval writers stress public schools and paid teaching for elementary courses)—these interesting developments do not concern us here. We are interested primarily in those laws which put study and teaching into the ritual as an element of worship. These fall into two groups: those dealing with the reading of the Torah on stated occasions, such as holidays, New Moons, Sabbaths, Mondays, and Thursdays, so that three days could never pass without some public reading from the Torah; and, secondly, those concerned with the insuring of a minimum of Torah study daily and nightly by each Israelite. The synagogue reading is subject to elaborate regulation. Though the cycle for the completion of the Five Books differed in different parts of the world, there were traditional principles as to the types of passages with which to begin and end, as to what breaks were proper, and numerous other details that have been embodied in the annual cycle that now predominates in most parts of Jewry. Strict rules were also laid down as to the accuracy of the handwritten scroll from which the reading was to take place, as to who could and who must be called up to read from the scroll or stand by during the reading and pronounce the prescribed blessings. Special portions for special Sabbaths, the selection of appropriate companion pieces from the prophets for *haphtarot,* the study by the individual to supplement the reading, twice in the original and once in the Targum—these are topics on which thought has been concentrated throughout the history of the synagogue.

The second branch of study appearing in the liturgy demands a closer scrutiny for its discovery and it will repay us more abundantly by the light it sheds on Jewish services. I speak of services rather than of prayer because the word "prayer" in its original and ordinary sense is misleading when used in connection with Judaism. Praying or asking for what we selfishly desire, that is, the use of *tehinnot* (for matters other than forgiveness), forms a remarkably small part of Jewish liturgy. It is practically excluded from the Sabbath and festival services. Even the week-day Eighteen Benedictions must be changed into something else on those days because they contain too many allusions to our daily cares. What, then, are the contents of Jewish services? They are words of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, confessions of our imperfections and words of high resolve, declarations of faith and of love for God and his Torah, recitations of historical narratives constituting a kind of philosophy of history. All of these elements ask for nothing, they are merely wholesome meditation. Then there is the intenser meditation—study.

The early portion of the morning service is devoted largely to the commandment of Torah study. It includes the opening words of the Mishnah Peah in which Torah study is glorified among the commandments for which no maximum is set and among those whose fruits are enjoyed in this world while the stock remains for the world to come. It is equal to all the rest of these commandments put together. Among the first benedictions in the serv-

ice is that which is intended to precede the Torah study of the day:

> Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments, and commanded us to occupy ourselves with the words of the Law. Make pleasant, therefore, we beseech Thee, O Lord our God, the words of Thy Law in our mouth and in the mouth of Thy people, the house of Israel, so that we with our offspring and the offspring of thy people, the house of Israel, may all know Thy name and learn Thy Law; Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who teachest the Law to Thy people Israel. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who hast chosen us from all nations and given us Thy Law. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who givest the Law.
>
> (Berakot, 11.)

The last part will be recognized as the very words of the first blessing pronounced by one who is honored by an *'aliyah,* an invitation to officiate at the reading of the Torah. In the service it is immediately followed by three Biblical verses, the minimum number constituting a connected passage requiring the recitation of the blessing. The three verses ordinarily chosen here are those of the priestly blessing. Then to complete the threefold cord of learning that the Rabbis have described, we read passages from the Mishnah and the Gemara, passages to which we shall refer again presently. A Baraita, the thirteen principles of interpretation of Rabbi Ishmael, is also included as an element of learning. We pass then through the meditative "verses of praise" and come upon Torah study again

in the *Shema'* paragraphs and the blessings that surround them. These take up the subject matter of the first books of the Bible with the Torah represented by the *Shema'* in its historical setting. The first blessing has to do with creation, the second with Israel's selection, and the third with its redemption. In the evening service the *Shema'* is placed in a similar setting. The Rabbis looked upon the reading of *Shema'* as a satisfactory minimum of Bible study, yet they were cautious not to mislead the ignorant by giving undue publicity to this view (Menahot, 99). Naturally they devoted much attention to the time and place and conditions of the recitation of the *Shema'* (e.g. at the beginning of Berakot) and not once did it occur to them to think any the less of it as a service because they saw in it a fulfillment of the obligation to study. The one idea embraced the other.

2. *Study as a Substitute for Specific Temple Service*

To understand the second phase of the identification of study with worship we revert to the peculiar choice of Mishnah and Gemara passages in the services to complete, with the Bible passages, the threefold cord. The Mishnah passage deals with details of the sacrifices in the Temple and the Gemara passage with the burning of incense. With these are recited Biblical references to the regular daily sacrifice and other details of the Temple cult. In the light of a Jewish doctrine that the study of these passages is the equivalent of the performance of the commandments therein, this part of the service is a substitute for the Temple service and thus

constitutes an unbroken tradition of *'abodah* in the strictest sense of the word. A passage printed in some of the larger prayer books gives voice to this theory:

> Sovereign of the Universe, Thou didst command us to offer the daily sacrifice at its appointed time; and that the priests be at their service, and the Levites on their platform and the Israelites at their station. But now, because of our sins, the Temple is laid waste and the daily sacrifice is discontinued. We have no priest at his service, no Levite on the platform, no Israelite at his station. But Thou hast said of us, "We shall render for bullocks the offering of our lips (Hosea xiv. 3)." Therefore may it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our Fathers, that the words of our lips be accounted, accepted and esteemed before Thee as the equivalent of having offered the daily sacrifice at its appointed time and having stood at our station.

This represents a point of view well established in the Talmud. Thus in one place (Ta'anit, 27b) we read as a reassurance for the whole world in the days when the Temple is lacking that the reading of the sections of the law describing the service serves the same purpose. We read again (Menahot, 110a) a collection of opinions likening the learning of Torah to the offering of incense, to Temple service in general, to the rebuilding of the Temple. In another place (Berakot, 26b) the several prayers are directly related to the daily sacrifices, and the *musaph,* or additional prayers of special days, to the additional offerings prescribed for these days.

3. *Study as Religious Activity Outside of the Liturgy*

It would be misleading, however, to argue from these passages, as is sometimes done, that Jewish devotion to learning has come about as a result of the loss of everything else that seemed of significance in Jewish life, national independence, native land, the Sanctuary, the priesthood. In this connection the story of Johanan ben Zakkai is sometimes repeated: At the fall of Jerusalem he saved Judaism by establishing a place where the study of the Torah could go on. But it is idle to seek the beginning of the importance attributed to Torah study so late in Jewish history. The Bible is full of it. The Lord says to Joshua—the words are taken to heart as pertaining to all Israel—"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein (Josh. i. 8)." The first Psalm catches up the important phrase: it declares that man happy, whose "delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in his Law does he meditate day and night." There is no longer encomium in the nineteenth Psalm, beginning: "The Law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul." And the longest of all Psalms, the hundred and nineteenth, is an eightfold acrostic poem in every verse of which there is a synonym for the Torah. Isaiah (ii. 3) and Micah (iv. 2) look forward to the time when Torah will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Jeremiah even while rebuking Israel bears witness to their pride and confidence that the

Law of the Lord is with them (Jer. viii. 7). The last of the prophets calls on Israel to remember the Law of Moses (Mal. iii. 22). There is hardly a break between this Biblical commendation of the study of the Law and the Midrashic and Talmudic elaboration of it. One need only turn to the sixth chapter of Pirke Abot, every line of which could be quoted here. I shall mention only that it sets learning above the priesthood and kingship. In fact the *talmid hakam* without a name outranks an illiterate high priest in the estimation of the Rabbis. In all of these discussions the Rabbis are too practical to overlook the tremendous importance of the study of the law as a means to an end. Sometimes they stress the relative importance of the works to which it leads a little more than at others. But they never forget that it is also an end in itself. It is best to study for the purpose of mastering and teaching, of keeping and performing the law; but it is also worth while to study without reference to putting the teachings into practice. Nay, we are advised to study regardless of our motive, for, beginning *lo' lishmah,* one comes naturally to a point where he studies *lishmah,* that is, with the proper intent (Pesahim, 50). It is quite important to bear in mind this Jewish feeling that Torah study is a good act in itself, if we are to estimate its meaning in Judaism as a form of worship.

There have, of course, been several reactions in Jewish history against the exaltation of learning as an end in itself. Something of the sort was brewing in the troublous times that gave birth to Christianity, and was taken advantage of by the agita-

tors who were trying to sway the *'am ha-aretz.* Something of the sort has cropped out now and again among Jewish mystics, medieval and modern. But at no time in Jewish history has Jewish respect for learning fallen so low that it could not serve the body of Israel as a means of communion with God.[4] There is a traditional Jewish attitude behind this wonderful feeling toward learning. It is the attitude that mothers pour into cradle songs that foretell careers for their children as men of learning. I can find no other cradle songs that dream of intellectual achievement. The same trait is reflected in Jewish hero-tales. The heroes are intellectual giants who have wrestled with difficult Torah questions. We need only remember how the Anglo-Saxons found even the partly illiterate founders of

[4] I do not consider the saying of Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel near the end of the first Chapter of Abot as contrary to the tradition described here, although I find it translated in most versions to the effect that "not learning but doing is the chief thing." In fact here we have the exception, which if properly understood completely proves the rule. When Simeon was a student, another, according to the record preserved by the Christians, also sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the wordiest man of all antiquity, Saul of Tarsus. He entertained no high respect for the study of the law, and none for its practice. His theory was that salvation must come by faith and not by works. He preached and argued and explained and wrote incessantly on this one point. Within the Christian Church he won his point, that the Gentiles be admitted without making them submit to the law, so long as they accepted a theory. In the light of this disturbance read the remarks of Simeon, the very antithesis of Saul: "All my days have I grown up among the wise, and I have found nought of better service than silence; 'midrash' is not the thing that counts, but 'works' are; whoso is profuse in words causes sin." It is not Torah study that he relegates to an inferior position; on the contrary that is closely related to the idea of "works," which means obedience to the Torah; it is the theorizing, the making everything turn on what we say or believe, that he finds an improper emphasis, an emphasis that involves its victim in sin.

Christianity too intellectual for their poetic needs and converted them into a chieftain with twelve warriors bold who went forth to battle with shining helmets. In like manner but in a different spirit the haggadists could imagine Father Jacob spending his youth in no more appropriate way than in study in the tents of Shem and Eber. No question is entertained about the familiarity of the outstanding figures of Israel, even the crude Jephthah, to say nothing of David and Solomon, with the *halakah.* A villain to assume heroic proportions must be as learned as Doeg and Ahithophel. To the *payetan* it is a matter of course that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, and Elijah rejoiced in the Rejoicing of the Law. This readiness to see beauty and heroism and joy as well as duty and piety and intrinsic worth in Torah study is the quality that has made the Jew fit to use the Torah as an instrument of worship.

His enthusiasm has saved him from the danger of being satisfied with the minimum worked out for him by the Rabbis. To the daily ritual the pious have added the Ten Commandments and various other Bible passages from the several types of books, constituting the *ma'amadot,* direct substitutes for the Israelites' part in the Temple service. But the ritual is only a beginning. Daily study is a part of the duty for every Jew. The synagogues have never ceased reverberating with the hum of Bible groups, Mishnah groups, and Gemara groups, and even groups for the study of mystic literature. In connection with the public reading of the Torah, the practice of interpreting and then of explaining

at greater length led to the development of the sermon. True, this custom fell into decay in the Middle Ages but it has recently been revived not only as a substitute for something else in the service as among the early Reformers, but in its old place as a supplement to the prescribed amount of Torah study.

We can imagine the confusion of the ancient Greeks and Romans who peered into the Jewish synagogues and failed to see anything that reminded them of their temples. There were no images, no sacrifices, no ceremonies—nothing but a school so far as they could see. The early Christians, of course, copied the services of the synagogue. Soon, however, it was found difficult to keep the Gentiles who attended interested in the long excerpts from the wanderings of the ancestors of the Jews in the wilderness and from their "obsolete" laws. Gradually the intellectual element of the Christian liturgy, which had come from the Jews, was submerged in the sacramental part, which came from the pagans. All that was left of the teaching in the synagogue, so often spoken of in the Christian Bible, was the sermon, which had become an inspirational talk loosely connected with a brief text wrested by main force from its context. A revival of interest in study has marked the liturgy of several Protestant sects in their beginnings, but the intellectual element has almost invariably been suppressed in the end or relegated to the Sunday-school class. Study is not ranked among the Christian methods of worship. It is missing, for example, in Professor James's well-known *Varieties of Religious Experience.* At

least, it is not the philosophy that he speaks of. It is not a mode of coercing belief. It is not the intruding of intellect in functions not primarily intellectual. The religious experience involved is a consciousness of the same kind that flows from saintliness in general, and in fact from all modes of worship that are at all effective in creating a feeling of nearness to the Object of Devotion. Rabbi Halaphta ben Dosa of the Village of Hanania said: "When ten people sit together and occupy themselves with the Torah, the Divine Presence abides among them." And the same is proved of five, or three, of two, and finally even of one. The inner satisfaction of hours spent in such nearness to the *Shekinah* illumines the popular Jewish picture of the World to Come, a place free from eating and drinking and worldly activities of all kinds, where the righteous sit crowned, enjoying the splendor of the *Shekinah* (Berakot, 17a). The exalted feeling of having well done a task divinely appointed, a task too in which man proves himself most God-like, that comes from having mastered a particularly difficult bit of Torah, explains much of the devotion to abstruse learning for which Jews have long been remarkable. But then the capacity for experiencing that exaltation in learning is indispensable for keeping Torah study effective as a means of worship. This capacity is to a remarkable degree the peculiar inheritance of Israel. "Lo' 'asah ken lekol goi, umishpatim bal yeda'um, Halleluyah" (Ps. cxlvii. 20).

IV

JEHUDA HALEVI'S DEFENSE OF HIS FAITH

BY

REV. DAVID DE SOLA POOL, PH.D.

IV

JEHUDA HALEVI'S DEFENSE OF HIS FAITH

The best-beloved Jewish figure of the whole of the Middle Ages is Jehuda Halevi. He was born in Toledo, Spain, in 1086, when the majestic poet, Ibn Gabirol, had been dead for a third of a century, and when Rashi, the famous Bible commentator, was nearing fifty years of age. It was the period when the Normans ruled England. Christian Europe was still in a state of ignorance and backwardness of which it is difficult for us fully to conceive. Though Jehuda Halevi was born in a part of Spain which in his day was Christian, the whole of Spain was still much under Moorish influence. From his earliest days he came under the influence of the best learning of the period. He absorbed the best of European culture, the best of Arabic culture, and the best of Jewish culture. He quotes equally Socrates, Al Ghazali, and the Talmud.

In him East and West met. Because of his living at the crossroad of culture, Jehuda Halevi, physician, poet, and philosopher, was in a uniquely advantageous position for interpreting Judaism in the light of the best knowledge of his time. In the eyes of the Christian world of old Castile, Judaism was a despised faith. To the Moorish world of southern

Spain, Judaism was an almost equally despised faith. The scientific philosophy of the day paid little or no attention to Judaism. There must long have germinated in the mind of Jehuda Halevi the desire to vindicate the essential purity and loftiness of the religion which was his very life-blood, and to show both its compatibility with scientific thinking and its true relation to the religions of Christianity and Islam, which were united only in despising their mother, Judaism.

After a life of scientific activity as a physician, and after a lyrical outpouring of unsurpassed Hebrew religious poetry, Jehuda Halevi in his later years wrote his *Book of Argument and Demonstration in Aid of the Despised Faith.* This is the true title of the book popularly known as *The Kuzari,* or more accurately, *Al Khazari.* It is one of the most remarkable, and certainly one of the most charming and most modern in spirit, of all the books written in the Middle Ages, whether Jewish or non-Jewish. It is an outstanding example of a positive religious controversy conducted not for the purpose of attacking the faith of another, but for the purpose of vindicating one's own faith. Though Jehuda Halevi wrote eight centuries ago, his work is almost as readable as though it were written to-day. For his was what we presumptuously call a modern mind. One or two generations later, Maimonides, with somewhat similar purpose, wrote his *Guide to the Perplexed,* a work generally acclaimed as the profoundest book of the Jewish Middle Ages. Maimonides set himself to reconcile Judaism with the scholastic Aristotelian philosophy or science current

in his days. When that philosophy was superseded in and after the Renaissance, Maimonides' masterly work, though it still retained much of permanent value, became largely obsolete. Not so *Al Khazari* of Jehuda Halevi. His book is for all ages. It does not base Judaism on metaphysical speculation and the subtleties of philosophy. With the spirit of a religious humanist, Halevi sets himself the task of defending Judaism against attack by showing its universal and eternal service to the soul of man. He writes not as one impersonally and objectively expounding Judaism, but as one who lived it and loved it. Truly, there have been few more beautifully religious souls than that of Jehuda Halevi.

The Quest for Religious Truth

With the instincts of a poet nurtured in the literary tradition of Job, he puts profound Jewish questionings into an artistic and interesting framework. This he rears on the fact of the conversion to Judaism twelve or thirteen centuries ago of the Khazars, a people of southern Russia. Hence the name of his book, *Al Khazari.* Halvei pictures a dream as coming to the King of the Khazars. In this dream an angel said to the King, "Thy intent is indeed pleasing to the Creator, but not thy way of acting." The King of the Khazars interprets this message to mean that, though there be one universal spirit of religion, not all religions are necessarily equally close to the truth. He thereupon sets himself to find out which religion he should adopt to make his way of acting more pleasing to God.

He summons first a philosopher-scientist, who

gives him a coldly intellectual, academic conception of religion. This does not satisfy the hungering soul of the King. He then invites a Christian cleric and a Moslem teacher, into the mouths of whom Halevi puts a remarkably fair and concise summing up of their fundamental teachings. Yet, they do not convince the King, whose reason rejects most of the dogmatic claims of Christianity, and who is not convinced by the arguments adduced by the Moslem. Seeing that both the Christian and the Moslem base their teachings on a foundation of Judaism, the King finds himself reluctantly compelled to invite a Rabbi, in order to hear whether possibly the exponent of "the despised faith" may be able to point to him a religious way of life which shall be more appealing.

The Historical Basis of Judaism

The Rabbi, unlike the preceding speakers, begins his argument not with an enunciation of speculative creeds, metaphysical dogmas, and theological doctrines, but with a statement of Jewish historical record. The King hears him at first with little patience and with much incredulity and ill-feigned contempt. The imperturbable Rabbi answers his questions with patient calmness and sweet reasonableness, but withal with strong conviction. Gradually the dialogue unfolds the presentation of Judaism as an historical religion in harmony with reason. The truth that is in philosophy, or as we would term it to-day, science, is shown to be not only compatible with, but even implicit in Judaism. At every step

the argument answers the difficulties which Halevi places in the mouth of the King. When the King suggests that the language of the Bible seems to personify God and to speak of Him in physical terms, the Rabbi in reply summarizes the Jewish conception of God as exalted above all personification. As a Jew, he does not try to prove the existence of God or to define His qualities. He rather shows that our knowledge of God cannot be derived through speculation. It is something that is emotionally felt with a conviction of absolute truth.

In *Al Khazari,* a true literary derivative of the Book of Job, there is much give and take in the argument. The King makes many a penetrating thrust, which is parried only by the Rabbi's skill. Thus, when the King calls to mind the failure of the Jewish people when they made the golden calf at the very foot of Mount Siani, the Rabbi replies that we must measure human achievement not by its lowest but by its highest attainment. The significant fact is not the many failures of the Jews, but that God revealed Himself to Israel, and at Sinai selected them to be the recipients of His word. Or again, when the King with an implied criticism of the failure of Judaism to become as widespread as Christianity or of Islam says: [1] "Would it not have been better or more commensurate with divine wisdom if all mankind had been guided in the true

[1] The quotations are based on Hartwig Hirschfeld's excellent English translation of the Arabic text, published by George Routledge & Sons in London and republished by the Bernard G. Richards Company in New York. I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to this work of my honored teacher.

path?" the Rabbi retorts, "Or would it not have been best for all living creatures to have been reasonable beings?"

The Future Life

There is throughout the argument much shrewd observation and many a subtle, enlivening touch which prevents it from descending to the dullness of formal exposition. For example, the King comments on the definite pictures which other religions paint of the life after death. But he adds, "I have never seen anyone believing in these promises, desire their speedy fulfilment." The Rabbi, in explaining the Jewish conception of the life after death, makes it clear that the after-life which we hope for is the state of coming into connection with the divine influence. The purer the life that we lead on earth, the closer, we hope, this connection will be. To this the King replies that we might in this way judge one's degree in the next world according to the station occupied in this. The Rabbi, quick to sense the taunt, says: "I see thee reproaching us with our degradation and poverty; but the best votaries of other religions boast of both." The King, equally keen, turns on the Rabbi and retorts that the Jewish people might also vaunt themselves of their humble station were it voluntary; to which the Rabbi replies that every Jew who wishes to do so can by the utterance of one word become the friend and the equal of his oppressor. The glory of the long history of Jewish martyrdom is contained in this fact, that a mere word of renunciation of Judaism would have purchased release from an age-long agony.

Palestine

After this frank preliminary discussion, Jehuda Halevi relates how the King of the Khazars became a convert to Judaism, and how the number of Jewish converts among the Khazars increased. History attests the fact of this conversion and the strength of the Jewish Khazar kingdom. Jehuda Halevi tells how the King continued his studies from the lips of the Rabbi. The discussion between the King and the Rabbi covers a wide field. For example, the second part of the book deals at some length with the problems of the Jewish calendar. The Rabbi shows how the standard of the Jewish calendar is set for Palestine, and he launches into an enthusiastic account of the central position which Palestine occupies in the organization of Jewish life and in Jewish thinking and praying:

> Thou didst also read how the patriarchs endeavored to live in that country whilst it was in the hands of pagans, how they yearned for it, and had their bones carried into it, as did Jacob and Joseph. Moses prayed to see it, and when this was denied him, he considered it a misfortune. Thereupon it was shown to him from the summit of Pisgah, which was to him an act of grace. Persians, Indians, Greeks, and children of other nations begged to be allowed to offer up sacrifices, and to be prayed for in the holy Temple. They spent their wealth at that place, though they believed in other laws not recognized by the Torah. They honor it to this day, although the Shechinah no longer appears there. All nations make pilgrimages to it, and long for it, excepting ourselves, because we are punished and are

in disgrace. All that the Rabbis tell of its great qualities would take too long to relate. One of their sayings is: "All roads lead up to Palestine, but none from it." Concerning a woman who refuses to go there with her husband, they decreed that she is divorced and she forfeits her marriage settlement. On the other hand, if the husband refuses to accompany his wife to Palestine, he is bound to divorce her and pay her settlement. They further say: "It is better to dwell in the Holy Land, even in a town mostly inhabited by heathens, than abroad in a town chiefly peopled by Israelites; for he who dwells in the Holy Land is compared to one who has a God, whilst he who dwells abroad is compared to one who has no God." . . . Another saying is: "To be buried in Palestine is as though one were buried beneath the altar." They praise him who is in the land more than him who is carried thither dead. They say concerning one who could have lived there, but did not do so, and who ordered his body to be carried thither after his death: "While you lived you made Mine inheritance an abomination, but in death you came and defiled my country."

(Jer. ii. 7.)

The Longing for Palestine

The King comments on this, saying, "If this be so, thou fallest short of the duty laid down in thy law by not endeavoring to reach that place and making it thy abode in life and death." The Rabbi admits that this is a severe reproach. He asserts that Providence was ready to restore the Jewish people to Palestine after the Babylonian Exile if all of them had willingly consented to return. But

only a part was prepared to do so, while the majority and the aristocracy remained in Babylon, preferring dependence and slavery.

> Divine Providence gives to man only as much as he is prepared to receive. Were we prepared to meet the God of our forefathers with a pure mind, we should find the same salvation as our fathers did in Egypt. Though we repeat in our prayers, "Worship His holy hill,—worship at His footstool,—He who restoreth His glory to Zion" (Ps. xlix. 9, 5), and other such words, we recite them but as the chattering of the starling and the nightingale. We do not realize what we say.

Israel a People

The King further remarks that the Jewish people is to-day a body without either head or heart. The Rabbi replies:

> Thou sayest rightly. But we are not even a body. We are only scattered limbs, like the "dry bones" which Ezekiel saw in his vision. These bones, however, O king of the Khazars, which have retained a trace of vital power, having once been the seat of a heart, brain, breath, soul, and intellect, are better than certain bodies· formed of marble or plaster, endowed with heads, eyes, ears, and all limbs, in which never dwelt the spirit of life, nor ever can dwell in them, since they are but imitations of man, not man in reality. . . . We are not like a dead body, but rather like a sick and wasted person who has been given up by the physician, but who yet hopes for a miracle or an extraordinary recovery, as it is said: "Can these bones live?" (Ezek. xxxvii. 3.)

This diagnosis of the desperate condition of the Jewish people leads up to the fine aphorism that "Israel amidst the nations is like the heart among the organs of the body." Whatever disturbance affects any part of the organism, it is the heart which suffers. It is the delicate sensitiveness of the heart with the life-fluid pulsating through it which makes it the most vital organ in the body, says Halevi.

Asceticism or Self-fulfillment

From this discussion, the Rabbi passes on to a consideration of the self-mortification of the ascetic:

> The divine law imposes no asceticism on us. It rather desires that we should keep the equipoise, and should grant every mental and physical faculty its due, as much as it can bear, without overburdening one faculty at the expense of another. Prolonged fasting is no act of piety for a weak person who, having succeeded in checking his desires, is not greedy. For him feasting is a burden and self-denial. Thy contrition on a fast day brings thee nothing the nearer to God than thy joy on the Sabbath and holy days which is the expression of a devout heart. Just as prayers demand devotion, so also is a pious mind necessary for finding pleasure in God's command and law, that thou shouldst be pleased with the law itself from love of the Law-giver. Thou seest how much He has distinguished thee, as if thou hadst been His guest invited to His festive board. Thou thankest Him in mind and word, and if thy joy lead thee so far as to sing and dance, that becomes worship and a bond of union between thee and the Divine Influence.

In the defense of Judaism against the charge that

it is a despised faith, we sometimes find implicit criticism of other claims made by those who bring this charge. Thus the relation of the Jew to the founder of Judaism is contrasted with the relation of Christian and Moslem to the founders of their religion:

> If there were no Israelites there would be no Torah. The Israelites did not derive their high position from Moses, but Moses received his for their sake. We are not the people of Moses, but the people of God.

The Nature of Piety

The discussion between the King of the Khazars and the Rabbi always maintains a high spiritual level. The purest teachings of the Bible and of the Rabbis are summarized in such words as

> Proof of the divine influence is not found in well chosen words, in raising the eyebrows, closing the eyes during prayers, penances, movements, and talk behind which there are no deeds; but in a pure mind, illustrated by corresponding actions which, by their very nature, are difficult to perform, and are yet performed with the utmost zeal and love.

On the other hand, there are many incidental touches in lighter vein. Thus, the King asks what is the reason why Jews move to and fro when reading the Bible. The Rabbi explains:

> It is said that this is done in order to arouse natural heat. My personal belief is that it stands in connection with the subject under discussion. As it often happened that many persons read at the

same time, it was possible that ten or more might read from one volume. This is the reason why our books are so large. Each person was obliged to bend down in his turn in order to read a passage, and then to turn back again. This resulted in a continual bending and sitting up, the book lying on the ground. Then this movement became a habit through constant seeing, observing and imitating, as is man's nature.

Duty to Society

In the third book, the Rabbi returns to the theme of asceticism, and shows how little sympathy Judaism has with this so generally accepted ideal of the Middle Ages:

> According to our view, a servant of God is not one who detaches himself from the world lest he be a burden to it, and it to him; or one who hates life, which is one of God's bounties granted to him, as it is written: "The number of thy days I will fulfill" (Ex. xxiii. 26). On the contrary, a servant of God loves the world and a long life, because it affords him opportunities of deserving the world to come. The more good he does in this life, the greater is his claim to the next world. In our time, place and people, "whilst no open vision exists" (the desire for study being small, and there being a lack of persons with a natural talent for it), he who would like to retire into asceticism, only courts distress and sickness for soul and body. The misery of sickness is visibly upon him, though one might regard it as the consequence of humility and contrition. He considers himself in prison and pain, but not because he enjoys his seclusion. How could it be otherwise? He has no intercourse with the

divine light, and cannot associate himself with it as did the prophets. He lacks the necessary learning to be absorbed in it and to enjoy it all the rest of his life as the philosopher did. Supposing he is God-fearing, righteous, desirous to meet his God in solitude, standing humbly and contritely, reciting as many prayers and supplications as he possibly can remember. All this affords him satisfaction for a few days as long as it is new. Words frequently repeated by the tongue lose their influence on the soul, and he cannot thus give the soul humbleness or submission. Thus he remains night and day, while his soul urges him to employ his innate powers in seeing, hearing, speaking, occupation, eating, cohabitation, gain, managing his house, helping the poor, or upholding the law with money in case of need.

Prayer

The Rabbi emphasizes that true prayer, as contrasted with this exaggerated preoccupation with the forms of contrition and prayer, is a moment of spiritual exaltation. A pious Jew looks forward to the approach of this moment of prayer

because while it lasts he resembles the spiritual beings, and he is removed above merely animal existence. The three times of daily prayer are the fruit of his day and night, and the Sabbath is the fruit of the week, because it has been appointed to establish the connection with the Divine Spirit and to serve God in joy, not in sadness. All this stands in the same relation to the soul as food to the human body. Prayer is for the soul what nourishment is for the body. The blessing of one prayer lasts till the time of the next, just as the strength derived from the morning meal lasts till supper. The

further one's soul is removed from the time of prayer, the more it is darkened by coming in contact with worldly matters. The more so, as necessity brings it into contact with unbecoming and soul-darkening words and songs, which exercise an attraction for one's soul that one is unable to master. During prayer one purges one's soul from all that has passed over it, and prepares it for the future. In this way, there elapses not a single week in which both soul and body do not receive preparation. Darkening elements having increased during the week, they annnot be cleansed except by consecrating one day to God's service and to physical rest. The body repairs on the Sabbath the waste suffered during the six days, and prepares itself for the work to come, whilst the soul remembers its own loss through the body's companionship. One cures oneself, so to speak, from a past illness, and provides oneself with a remedy to ward off any future sickness.

The Sabbath

The King of the Khazars agrees that God appointed the Sabbath and the Holy Days among the strongest means of preserving the strength and luster of the Jewish people.

Had these not been, you would not enjoy a single day in your life. Now, however, you are allowed to spend the sixth part of life in rest of body and soul. Even kings are unable to do as much, as their souls have no respite on their days of rest. If the smallest business calls them on that day to work and stir, they must move and stir, complete rest being denied to them. Had these laws not been, your toil would benefit others, because it would

become their prey. Whatever you spend on these days is your profit for this life and the next, because it is spent for the glory of God."

Truly, the Jew has known little freedom except within the law, and little relaxation from an unnatural tension of living except through the Sabbath and festivals.

Congregational Worship

The topic of congregational worship is brought up. The Rabbi points out that

> Communal prayer has many advantages. In the first instance a community will never pray for a thing which is hurtful to the individual. An individual sometimes prays for something to the disadvantage of other individuals, or others may pray for something that is to his disadvantage. One of the conditions of prayer is that its object be profitable to society, and not hurtful in any way. Another advantage of communal prayer is that since an individual rarely accomplishes his prayer without slips and errors, it has been laid down that the individual recite the prayers of a community, and if possible in a community of not less than ten persons, so that one makes up for the forgetfulness or error of the other. In this way a complete prayer is gained, read with unalloyed devotion. . . . A person who prays but for himself is like one who retires alone into his house, refusing to assist his fellow-citizens in the repair of their walls.

The individual is to the community as a limb to the body. What the individual contributes to the community in actions is represented by the Sabbath,

the Holy Days, and similar institutions; in words it is prayers, blessings, and thanksgivings; in abstract things it is love, reverence, and joy.

Jewish Tradition

The third part of the book deals in large measure with the claims of the Karaites. These were Jews in the early Middle Ages who denied the validity of Jewish oral tradition. They attempted to go back to a literal scripturalism. In effect, the Karaite movement resulted in a harsh application of the written Jewish law without the mitigations of its complementary oral tradition.

The Rabbi defends this oral tradition against the criticisms of the Karaites, and their untenable position of trying to understand the Bible without the aid of tradition. He convinces the King that, should the Karaite rejection of the Jewish historical tradition prevail, there would be as many different codes of interpretation of Judaism as there are opinions.

The "Lex Talionis"

Still the King raises objections which apparently have been urged in criticism in every generation. Thus, he asks, "Does not our Torah teach retaliation, namely, 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth': as he hath caused a blemish in man so shall it be done to him?" (Lev. xxiv. 20.) The Rabbi replies: "And is it not said immediately afterwards, 'And he that killeth a beast *shall make it good?*'—thus showing that the intention which Jewish tradition has seen in this *lex talionis* is the principle of compensatory ransom.

For the sentence, "Wound for wound, and stripe for stripe" (Ex. xxi. 25), embodies ideas antagonistic to common sense if interpreted literally. How can we determine such a thing? One person may die from a wound, whilst another person may recover from the same. How can we gauge whether it is the same? How can we take away the eye of a one-eyed person in order to do justice to a person with two eyes? When the former would be totally blind, the latter would still have one eye."

The Authority of Tradition

In his defense of Jewish tradition, the Rabbi further makes it clear that were our laws not definitely fixed they would not be secure from the admixture of strange elements and from the loss of some component parts, because argument and individual taste would become guiding principles of Judaism. When the Sages declared a thing lawful or unlawful, they did so not in obedience to their own taste or inclination, but in keeping with the results of the inherited traditional knowledge handed down to them.

Jehuda Halevi, speaking through the Rabbi, does not deny

that there are matters in the Talmud of which I am unable to give thee a satisfactory explanation, or even bring them into connection with the whole. These things stand in the Talmud through the conscientiousness of the disciples, who followed the principle that "even the commonplace talk of the sages requires study." They took care to reproduce only that which they had heard from their teachers, striving at the same time to understand everything they had heard from their masters. In this they

went so far as to render it in the same words, although they may not have grasped its meaning.

Limitations of Human Understanding

Jehuda Halevi's elucidation of Judaism is distinguished from that of other writers by the richness of his imagery and his use of poetic figures. An apt metaphor which he uses more than once is derived from light. Our human limitations in conceiving of God are forcibly expressed in these words:

> People with weak eyes see best by subdued light, after sunset, like the bat. They can see only in the shade. But people with strong eyes can see in the sunlight. No eye, however, can look into the bright sun. He who attempts to do so is stricken with blindness.

Jehuda Halevi uses this figure of light also as an analogy for corroborating the existence of a First Cause: "Were only the rays of the sun visible, but not the sun itself, their origin would have to be demonstrated."

Astrology

Later on he uses the figure of light in support of having fixed times for prayer. The Rabbi says:

> Just as a person with sound eyes can look at the sun, show it to others and observe it only from certain elevated spots, and at a certain hour of the day when it rises, so also he who may gaze at the divine light, has his time and places in which he can behold it. These times are the hours of prayer, especially on days of repentance, and the places are those of prophecy.

The King questions whether this opinion does not admit the teachings of astrology as to the dominion of hours, days and places. The Rabbi answers that

> The particulars of the influence of heavenly spheres on terrestrial matters are unknown to us. The astrologer boasts of knowing them, but we Jews repudiate this and assert that no mortal can fathom them.

It is extraordinary how Jehuda Halevi, Maimonides, and other leading Jewish teachers of the Middle Ages, who lived in a world in which astrology was generally accepted, nevertheless rose above it and drew a sharp and clear line of distinction between the pseudo-science of astrology and the science of astronomy.

Thirst for God

The Jew's thirst for God, the Rabbi declares, is not the same as a philosopher's or a scientist's interest in religion. It cannot be satisfied by cold reasoning; it needs outward and inward revelation. Science is no substitute for religion. The Jew is not objectively interested in religion.

> The philosopher seeks God only that He may be able to describe Him accurately in detail, as he would describe the earth, explaining that it is in the center of the great sphere, but not in that of the zodiac. To him ignorance of God would be no more injurious than would ignorance concerning the earth be injurious to those who consider it flat."

But the Jew seeks God because he needs Him, because he cannot live without Him. To the Jew,

God is not a necessity of the mind, but a necessity of the soul; not a necessity of logic, but a necessity of life. And, therefore, Halevi says, despite the simplicity of speech and ruggedness of similes of many religious teachers, the soul finds satisfaction in their teachings, while the refined eloquence and logical impressiveness of the scientific philosopher does not draw the people.

Messianic Vision

The Rabbi declares that the Jewish religion, though it may externally appear as a despised faith, is preserved by the Jew for the ultimate purpose of a wise Providence. God has His design with us. This is compared to the seed in the ground which seems to undergo a disintegration. But it is in truth the seed which transforms earth and water into its own substance, until at length, with the casting off of husks and leaves, the plant with its flower and fruit appears. Even so, Christianity and Islam are preparing the world for the full Messianic fruition which will come to mankind from the Jewish seed which at present seems to be almost lost in the earth.

Faith

So the argument proceeds, covering an amazing fullness of debated questions concerning Jews and Judaism. It passes from casual observations to deeply philosophical religious considerations. The Jew's basic faith, Jehuda Halevi sums us in the words:

> That which we cannot discover may be confidently left to God's omniscience and justice. A man

must admit that he does not know the reasons, although they may lie on the surface, and still less can those be known which are really hidden.

Halevi's Yearning for Jerusalem

The book closes on an autobiographical note. Jehuda Halevi writes that

> The Rabbi was concerned to leave the land of the Khazari and to betake himself to Jerusalem. The King was loth to let him go, and spoke to him in this sense as follows: What is there to seek in Palestine nowadays, since the divine reflex is absent from it, whilst, with a pure mind and desire, one can approach God in any place? Why wilt thou run into danger on land and water and among various peoples?" The Rabbi answered: "The visible Shechinah has indeed disappeared . . . but the invisible and spiritual Shechinah is with every born Israelite of virtuous life, pure heart, and upright mind before the Lord of Israel. Palestine is especially distinguished by the Lord of Israel, and no function can be perfect except there. Many of the Jewish laws do not concern those who do not live there; heart and soul are perfectly pure and immaculate only in the place which is believed to be specially selected by God."

The King comments:

> I thought that thou didst love freedom. But now I see thee finding new religious duties which are in abeyance here, but which thou wilt be obliged to fulfill in Palestine.

To which the Rabbi replies:

> I seek freedom only from the service of those numerous people whose favor I do not care for, and

shall never obtain, though I worked for it all my life. Even if I could obtain it, it would not profit me—I mean serving men and courting their favor. I would rather seek the service of the One whose favor is obtained with the smallest effort, yet it profits in this world and the next. This is the favor of God. His service spells freedom, and humility before Him is true honor.

The Rabbi quotes the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of Psalm cii:

"Thou wilt arise and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favor her, yea, the appointed time is come. For Thy servants take pleasure in her stones and embrace her dust!" He adds: "This means that Jerusalem can be rebuilt only when Israel yearns for it to such an extent that they embrace its stones and dust."

The King replies: "If this be so, it would be a sin to hinder thee. It is, on the contrary, a merit to assist thee. May God grant thee His help, and be thy protector and friend. May He favor thee in His mercy."

History records that after Jehuda Halevi had finished writing this exposition and vindication of the faith of the Jew, as lucid as it is charming, as spiritual as it is irenic, as original as it is moving, he bade farewell to his family and friends and braved the dangers of travel by land and by sea in order to end his days on the sacred soil which he loved so well. Precious and beloved as are the songs which flashed from the flaming heart of this darling of his people, no less precious is his fascinating defence of "the despised faith" known as *Al Khazari.*

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THE CARE OF ANIMALS IN JEWISH LIFE AND LORE

BY

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V

THE CARE OF ANIMALS IN JEWISH LIFE AND LORE

It is less than a century that the enlightened nations of Europe and America have become aware of their duties to the animal world.[1] This awakened consciousness has expressed itself in the organization of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The work of the founders of these societies, and their followers, has been not only to prevent cruelty to animals on the part of their fellow men, but also to create a sentiment that would ultimately make the existence of these societies unnecessary. Part of their work has been to elevate animal rights to the status of legislation, so that the protection of the law court could be invoked against their inhuman treatment. To a great extent these societies have been successful in their purposes.

However, with the zeal of a new-born crusade, and with a too lofty conception of the importance of their work, they have sometimes allowed animal rights to assume a higher value in the scale than human rights, and have thus often done great harm

[1] One of the founders of the S. P. C. A., established 1824, was Louis Gompertz, a Jew, whose book, *Moral Inquiries on the Situation of Man and Brutes,* is said to have given the impetus to this movement.

by reckless words and deeds. Instead of seeking guidance from earlier generations and other peoples, they have presumed rather that until their time humane treatment was common to no other people. Thus we find Schopenhauer, probably the greatest lover of animals of the nineteenth century and a great supporter of these societies, making this statement: "The unpardonable forgetfulness in which the lower animals have hitherto been left by the moralists of Europe is well known. It is pretended that beasts have no rights. They persuade themselves that our conduct in regard to them has nothing to do with morals—a doctrine revolting, gross, and barbarous, peculiar to the West, and having its roots in Judaism."

The Oriental Attitude

Nothing could be further from the truth. With the exception of Rome, every ancient people, and especially those of the Orient, recognized man's duties and obligations to God's more lowly creatures. The high regard for animal life in the East is well known. Due to the doctrine of soul-wandering, which is the dominant feature of most of India's religions, animals there hold a very exalted position. "Wise people," says the Bhagavad-Gita, "see the same soul in Brahman, in worms, in the outcasts, in the dog and the elephant, in beasts, cows, and gnats." The Indian mind seized the idea that there was one perfect soul in the Universe, and then built up a soul-evolution; there was no essential difference between the soul of the lowliest creature and that of man.

This identification of the soul of man as part of a universal soul has led to the doctrine among Indians (Buddhists, Brahmans, and especially Jainas) known as Ahimsa or "non-killing." Jainas will kill nothing. They will often allow gnats, flies, and other insects to bite them without losing patience. Those who do eat meat will do so only after the animal has died a natural death. At least they will have no share in its killing. In fact, the Jainas have even established hospitals for animals, where they often are subjected to years of pain and torment rather than that their owners should be guilty of violation of Ahimsa. No excuse is recognized for taking animal life. Even in self-defense, the religious Jaina will not only allow himself to be wounded but will also bear these wounds patiently, expressing no anger toward the beast.

Among the ancient Persians we find that a theory of animals formed an integral part of their whole religious scheme. The bride on her wedding day was blessed as follows: "Make thyself loved for the sake of the children that will come to thee, guard this house, be as one with thy husband. Cast no evil looks, hate not thy spouse, be gentle in thought and deed, even to the animals of this home." In the Avesta, the worshipers of God and the worshipers of Devas (demons) are contrasted with those who breed and take good care of cattle, and those who ill-treat these animals.

There is a Persian folk-tale of one Arda-Viraf, who, in order to tell his countrymen of heaven and hell, allowed himself to be given a strong narcotic

which made him unconscious for several days. During this time the soul, released from its body, wandered through the upper and nether regions. Upon regaining consciousness he relates his adventures. The most terrible punishments he speaks of are those visited upon persons who are unkind to helpless infants or dumb animals. Those who overwork or overload their beasts of burden, or those who work them when they suffer from illness, were seen by him as the targets of a never-ending rain of stones. Those who wantonly killed animals had a knife thrust through their hearts. If one muzzled his ox while plowing he was trampled under the feet of cattle. The vision of Arda-Viraf has always been holy to the Persians, and one can realize what an effect these words had on their behavior toward the lower animals.

Roman Cruelties

It is only when we reach Rome and the Western world that we find an inhuman attitude toward animals. The arena is not the first example of Rome's blood-stained story. As early as the second century before the common era, the practice of wild-beast baiting was very popular. When the interest of the arena seized the Romans, their cruelty knew no bounds, amounting almost to a form of insanity.

To the accompaniment of music (the shows in the arena took the form of a variety entertainment) fights between animals of unequal strength and endurance were arranged. The leopard was pitted against the meek ass, the lion against an ox. It was

only natural that these shows should lead to the gladiatorial combats between men and beasts. They were still in full blast far into the fourteenth century, several feeble protests by Papal Bulls notwithstanding.

Among the Christians

Early Christianity was almost as devoid of pity for dumb animals as the Roman world. This is due primarily to the highly exalted position to which the human soul was elevated by the early Christians. The individual human soul was held to be exclusively the concern of the Church. Only man was immortal. Of what value could the beasts be who merely existed and perished?

Another determining fact was the views on this subject held by Celsus and Porphyry, two avowed opponents of the Church. Celsus denied that man alone could reason. Nor did he favor the idea that all the world was created for man's pleasure and service alone. He could not see that the sun and moon were made to serve mankind. "Why mankind?" he asks; "why not ants and flies? Night serves them for rest, and day for seeing and working. If someone, then, looked down from the heights of heaven to the earth, what difference would he see between our actions and those of ants and bees? God no more gets angry with men than with rats and monkeys. Everything keeps its appointed place." This relegation of the human to such profound insignificance was not stomached by the Church Fathers, who while exalting the human animal developed an utter disregard for animal life. Porphyry, who was even more outspoken in his brief

on all sentient beings, claimed for them, among other things, an intelligent soul.

All through the Middle Ages the Christian authorities did not raise a finger in protest against the shows in the arena or the other forms of cruelty to animals. It is only twenty years since the Pope came out openly in support of movements working for the prevention of cruelty to animals, being careful, however, to point out that man owes them no duties.

It is only during the last century, beginning with Jeremy Bentham, that steps were taken to arouse man to his duties toward animals. As was to be expected, much opposition was encountered. But the crusaders have been rather successful, though not always practical nor tactful nor respectful of others' rights.

The Jewish Attitude

Schopenhauer linked Judaism with Christianity when he made his condemnation. It was left to Mr. Francis H. Rowley, the humane worker of the Massachusetts Society, to clear Schopenhauer of his sin against Christianity. Mr. Rowley, in his book *The Humane Idea,* deliberately leaves out the words "and early Christianity," putting all the ills of modern thought in this direction on the already much-wronged Jew. Yet Judaism cannot be reproached on this score, for it has ever recognized the rights of animals.

One may refer to many such passages as that in Proverbs xiii. 10: "A righteous man careth for the life of his beast; but the mercies of the wicked are cruelty." One of the seven great commands for all

mankind is the Rabbinical proscription of *ebher min ha-hai*—cutting parts for food from the living flesh. All early and later Jewish writings stringently prohibit cruelty to animals; and a great store of references thereto can be found in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* article on the subject. The Jews' horror of olden cruelties in the Circus and other ancient showplaces is one of the distinctions of their ethical writings.

Judaism has struck the golden mean. It has not made man subservient to animals, as some Eastern peoples (the Indians particularly) have done. Nor has it swung at any time to the other extreme and neglected or overlooked its duties to earth's lowlier creatures, as the Romans and early Christians did. To use the phrase of an ancient, in Judaism cruelty to animals consisted not in the use, but in the abuse of them. "And have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. i. 20). And in the very next verse: "To you . . . and to every beast of the earth . . . and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, I have given every green herb for food." In the first chatper of Genesis man was given his place. He was to be the ruler, but a ruler that neglects not the needs nor forgets the rights of his subjects.

In the Torah we find innumerable instances which show that animals were given legal rights. What our humane societies are trying to do now was settled law in the time of Moses. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" was as binding upon the Jew as any part of the Deca-

logue. He could be called before a tribunal to answer for a violation and a penalty could be imposed upon him. Because of the stringency of the law and because it actually expressed the conscience of the Jews, there never was any need of an S. P. C. A. among Jews living under their own jurisdiction.

The Torah also provided: "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way . . . and the dam is sitting upon the young or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young! . . ." (Deut. xxii. 6). The Talmud makes a very interesting comment on this verse. The prohibition tried to do away entirely with the taking of nests. It therefore makes it obligatory to drive away the mother before taking the young. This, it explains, will give man an opportunity to consider the injustice and the hardship he is causing by this act, and he may repent before his attempt. It is also interesting to note that this is one of the very few instances in the Bible where a specific punishment is mentioned for a transgression. The verse ends, "that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days." Almost the identical words follow the Fifth Commandment, thus linking honor of mother and father with consideration for the feelings of birds toward their young.

Additional Legislation

"Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together" (Deut. xxii. 10). This prohibited the yoking of any two animals of different breed. Ibn Ezra in his commentary explains that the unequal

steps of the animals would cause discomfort to the bigger, and the unequal strength distress to the weaker.

The Bible not only wished to assert rights for animals, and to see that these rights were respected, but it aimed at preventing the heart of man from growing hard and callous. We therefore find that the young of any cattle was not to be torn from its mother until the eighth day (Ex. xxii. 24), and that they were not to be killed on the same day, "for concerning mother love there is no difference between man and beast, love being a matter of feeling, not of reason." The Scripture phrase is, "Thou shalt not seethe the kid in its mother's milk" (Ex. xxiii. 19). R. Samuel ben Meir explains this law as an admonition: "Do not be cruel toward animals." The Talmud provides that, if one sells any cattle together with its young, the seller is to notify the buyer of the relationship so that he may not unintentionally be guilty of a breach of the commandment.

In the law relating to Sabbath observance, no point is stressed more strongly than that which gives repose to all beasts of burden: "On it thou shalt not do any manner of work, thou . . . nor thine ox nor thine ass nor any of thy cattle" (Ex. xx. 9). In one text rest for animals is given as the reason for the Sabbath: "Six days shalt thou do thy work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest; *that* thine ox and thine ass may have rest" (Ex. xxiii. 12). In the seventh year, when the soil was not to be sown, and all crops or fruits which grew of themselves were free to any who cared to take them, the

beasts were not forgotten: "But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie fallow . . . and what they leave the beast of the field shall eat" (Lev. xxv. 7). On no occasion were God's creatures forgotten. Even when the Temple was built, sanctuaries were provided for the comfort and rest of the birds, as the Psalmist testifies.

There is other interesting legislation in the Mosaic code relating to animals: "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that thou hatest lying under its burden, thou shalt forbear to pass by him; thou shalt surely release it with him" (Ex. xxiii. 5).[2] Both these passages refer to beasts belonging to an enemy, but this is not said to distinguish these from a friend's animals. It merely shows that the duty was owing to the animal, not to the person, as the Talmud itself points out. It is from the latter passage that the Rabbis deduced the principle that cruelty to animals is a violation of the Mosaic code, and not merely a Rabbinic ordinance (T. B. Baba Metzia, 32a).

About Hunting

Where the Bible is silent, the Talmud and later Jewish codes supply us with rules. It seems certain that no Jewish king or any other great historical figure indulged in hunting. Josephus, in his *Antiquities,* mentions that the semi-heathen king, Herod the Great (37-3 B.C.E.), hunted with horses,

[2] Maimonides (1135-1204) decides on the basis of the Torah that in case of a vehicular accident first attention must be given to unloading the burdens of the animals, to avoid transgression of "T'saar Baale ha-hayim," of the prohibition to afflict animals.

much to the disgust and disapproval of Jewish men of learning. The Rabbis, in commenting on the first verse of Psalms—"Happy is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked"—quote as an example one who hunts beasts with the aid of bloodhounds (T. B. Abodah Zarah, 18b). It appears from Leviticus (xvii. 13) that hunting as a sport was always condemned and only excusable when the animal was to be put to good and legitimate use. Then the greatest care was to be taken not to inflict any avoidable suffering. If the animal were to be used for food, shooting or trapping in any way that would maim the beast would render it unfit for Jewish consumption. Since only under these conditions could it be used for food, the Jewish hunter was an anomaly.

The Responsum of Rabbi Meir

Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg (1220-1293) in his Responsa writes that life in the future world would be denied to any Jew who indulged in hunting with the aid of bloodhounds. In Ezekiel Landau's Responsa (1720-1793) hunting as a sport is condemned —with which later codifiers are in accord. Because of the completeness with which he discusses the problem, I shall quote him at greater length.

> The following question has been submitted to me: "I have been favored by God with a large estate consisting of villages and forests, the latter swarming with wild animals. Is it permitted to hunt these animals as a mere pastime? Will such an act constitute a violation of the laws concerning Cruelty to Animals?"

Answer. Rabbi Israel Isserles (c. 1520) in his Responsa has already considered this problem. He shows that only in the following instances will the rules of Cruelty to Animals not apply—viz: When an act is done for a material benefit to man, or when the victim is killed outright. . . .

So much for the legal aspect of the problem. But I am surprised that you were moved to ask such a question. We find in the Torah the sport of hunting imputed to no one but to such fierce characters as Nimrod and Esau, never to any of the Patriarchs or to their descendants. The customary blessing, "Thou shalt outlive," offered to one donning a new garment, is according to a decision of Rabbi Weil (quoted by R'ma Orach Chaim, § 223) omitted altogether in the case of a fur coat. Such a blessing might make it appear that killing of animals is not only condoned but actually desirable, which is contrary to the verse in Psalms (cxlv. 9): "And his tender mercies are over all His works."

It is true that the R'ma (R. Moses Isserles [1520-1572], commentator upon Caro's Code, the Shulchan Aruch) remarks that the reason given is weak. But the weakness lies only in the fact that putting on a fur coat does not necessarily imply that the owner directly caused the killing. The fur may be of animals who died a natural death. And the R'ma agrees with the decision of Rabbi Weil. But I cannot comprehend how a Jew could even dream of killing animals merely for the pleasure of hunting, when he has no immediate need for the bodies of the creatures.

Some have tried to justify the hunting of wild animals on the ground that they are liable to injure man, basing their view on the dictum of Rabbi Eliezer (Sanhedrin, 2a): "Whoever is early in de-

stroying them has done an act of merit." This, however, is a twofold mistake. First, because the final decision does not follow Rabbi Eliezer, and, secondly, because, as Resh Lakish explains, Rabbi Eliezer refers only to the animal which has already shown his danger to, and ferocity toward, man.

The view has also been advanced that this attitude toward beasts refers only to those who have an owner and are therefore under care and to some extent tamed. Where, however, there is no owner, it is considered to be in a ferocious state and liable to do harm; it is therefore permitted to kill them even on the Sabbath.

This is also erroneous, and does not touch our case. The above is true only when these wild animals are found in places inhabited by man, so that they are a menace to society. It is certainly no meritorious act to pursue them in their own haunts. It is rather a lustful occupation. There is a distinction made for one who derives his livelihood from hunting by selling the furs or skins, etc. The animal world is subordinated to man to provide for his needs. It makes no difference if we take the life of clean animals for food, or kill unclean animals for their skins and furs. But when the act is not prompted by such a motive, it is downright cruelty. . . .

Kindness to Animals

Aaron Ha-Levi of Barcelona (Spanish Talmudist of the end of the thirteenth century), in his *Hinnuk* remarks upon the precept concerning the treading ox (Deut. xxv. 4):

It is the duty of man to accustom himself to show kindness, compassion, and consideration to his

> fellow creatures. When we therefore treat considerately even the animals given for our use, and withdraw not from them some of the fruits of what their labor obtains for us, we educate our soul thereby to be all the kinder to our fellow men, and accustom ourselves not to withhold from them what is their due, but to allow them to enjoy with us the result of that to which they have contributed.

The Rabbis appealed to the sense of duty and mercy where an actual rule of law could not be made. Thus it was considered man's duty to feed any domesticated animals in his possession before he himself dined (T. B. Berakot, 40a). There is another statement to the effect that no man should keep in his possession any animal which he could not provide with food (T. Y. Yebamot, XV). Moral urge would be brought to bear against the guilty where legal pressure could not be obtained.

All severity of the Sabbath laws notwithstanding, an animal which had fallen into a ditch on the Sabbath was to be saved even if a violation of a Sabbath ordinance were involved (T. B. Shabbat, 128b). Likewise cows and sheep and goats could be milked on the Sabbath to avoid any suffering to them (R. Jacob Asher ad T. B. Baba M. II, 29). This, however, to be done by a Gentile.

Slaughtering ("Shechitah")

In the picture of Paradise portrayed for us in Genesis, man is shown at peace with the whole animal kingdom. Man was not permitted to eat flesh of any living thing. Only after man proved unfit for the high moral standard set at the beginning was

meat made part of the human diet. "Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you: as the green herb have I given you all" (Gen. ix. 3). This was God's command to Noah. However, when Isaiah pictures the ideal state for us, he sees peace again among all living things (Is. xi. 6-8).

Recognizing man's weaknesses, however, the Jewish law readily permitted the eating of meat with certain qualifications. Not all beasts are clean. Those that can be eaten are to be slaughtered very carefully and only by certain qualified persons. The Bible neither describes the method of slaughter nor does it give the reasons why this method of taking the beast's life was chosen. Maimonides, however (in his *Guide to the Perplexed,* III, 26), states that this method was the most painless and the one which most quickly rendered the animal unconscious. An examination of the regulations of the Jewish method of slaughter bears him out.

In the first place, only specially trained slaughterers, approved by the religious heads of communities, can be employed. They must be men of some cultural attainment, of good character, and God-fearing, observant Jews. These men are usually examined at intervals of less than three years, and if found wanting in any particular are removed from office. Minors, physically weak persons, men under influence of alcohol, are rejected.

The rules regarding the knife are equally severe. It must be sharper than a razor, without the slightest indentation, ridge, or projection. The knife must be tested before and after each killing.

The killing consists in cutting the esophagus and the trachea, the jugular vein and carotid arteries. The cutting of these blood vessels severs the connection with the brain and causes instantaneous unconsciousness. According to Dr. Dembo and other physiologists, loss of consciousness is caused by lack of blood supply to the brain. The only pain suffered by the animal is the cutting of the skin, which is minimized very considerably by the sharpness of the instrument. At most it is like a cut of the finger with a sharp knife. Practically all other methods provide for the stunning of the beast before it is bled. Because the skull of an ox is harder and stronger than that of a man, it frequently takes five or six blows before the animal is unconscious, causing protracted suffering. But there are those who in their zeal to uphold the rights of animals forget that human beings also have certain rights to live unmolested. There still are millions of Jews who would eat no meat unless the animal is killed according to the Jewish method of slaughter.

Jews as Vegetarians

Though Jews have not been abstainers, there always have been some expressing the sentiment that the use of meat should be minimized. The Talmud speaks of "lust of flesh" (T. B. Hullin, 16a). Moses strongly rebukes the Jews when they demand meat in the wilderness (Num. xi. 18; see also esp. Deut. xxi. 20, and T. B. Sanhedrin, 70a). Don Isaac Abarbanel, commenting on the famous passage of Is. xi. 7, says that meat rouses in man his cruel nature. And the Talmud warns the father not to

teach his son to indulge overmuch in the eating of flesh.

The Soul of the Animal

In the Pentateuch the animals are endowed with souls. After the deluge there was "the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" (Gen. ix. 9-10). And when Noah was given to eat flesh, he was warned not to eat it "with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof" (Gen. ix. 4). The blood is regarded as the seat of the soul. It contains the very life of the beast. The animals were examples of virtue. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise" (Prov. vi. 6). The Talmud, in a most interesting statement, says: "Even if the Torah were not given to us, we could still learn modesty from the cat, honesty from the ant, purity from the pigeon and good manners from the rooster" (T. B. Erubin, 100a).

Rebecca, Jacob, Moses, and David, among others, are all praised for their kindness to animals. The Midrash relates that both Moses and David were chosen to lead Israel because of this virtue. Moses was tending the flocks of Jethro when one day a little goat ran away. Moses followed it until it reached a pool of water. He then came up to it and said, "I did not know that you were thirsty; you are surely also tired and hungry!" He lifted it to his shoulders and carried it home. And the Lord then said, "Thou hast mercy on this little goat; then thou canst be the leader and shepherd for my flock Israel" (Midrash Ex. Rabba, II).

David used to separate the young sheep from

the old. The young he would bring to the soft grass and the old to the hard grass. And the Lord said, "He who knows to care for each one's need, he shall come and lead my people" (ibid.).

There is a story of a married couple who for many years were childless. They asked a pious man to pray for them. He advised them to place their troughs in such a position that even the young chicks would be able to quench their thirst, and the cause for complaint would be removed. Sterility then was regarded as the punishment for their carelessness in treatment of animals.

Rabbi Judah and the Calf

Even more touching is the story told of Rabbi Judah the Prince. A calf was being led to the slaughter house. As if in full knowledge of what was going on, it protested as it passed Rabbi Judah, and refused to move. The Rabbi exclaimed, "Go, for this were you created!" The story relates that because of this he was stricken with a sore malady, which he bore for thirteen years, until one day he prevented an act of unkindness on the part of his maid toward some creature in his home. He was then restored to health (T. B. Baba Metzia, 85a).

God's Love of the Animal

"The righteous taketh knowledge of the cause of the poor" (Prov. xxiii. 7). The Talmud says, in connection with this verse,

> The Lord knew that the dog would have difficulty in finding food. He therefore created it so that its

> stomach could retain food for three days (T. B. Shabbat, 155a).
>
> And when man shall become proud in his heart, say unto him, "The little fly has preceded you in creation" (T. B. San., 38a).

Similar verses in the Bible, especially in Psalms and Proverbs, are very numerous:

> And should I not have pity on Nineveh . . . wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and left hand, and also much cattle? (Jonah iv. 11.)
>
> Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young (Ps. lxxxiv. 3).

It is no mere accident that the prayer which is recited twice daily by Jews everywhere contains this most beautiful verse: "And His tender mercies are over all His works" (Ps. xlv. 9).

VI

THE SPREAD OF JUDAISM THROUGH THE AGES

BY

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VI

THE SPREAD OF JUDAISM THROUGH THE AGES

Among the many fallacies affecting the Jews and Judaism, there is none which is so generally accepted and so deeply rooted as that which declares Judaism to be a mere tribal religion, and to have neither the wide outlook nor the ideal expectation of becoming a world-religion. This idea has been sedulously fostered, especially by those who, claiming for themselves a universal outlook, compare their expansion with the apparent shrinkage of Judaism in relation to other creeds. Many factors have contributed to create and strengthen this idea, for which, however, there is not the slightest justification. In searching the Scriptures, one cannot find a single trace of Judaism being reserved, as it were, for the children of Jacob, or anything that could be construed as being adverse to bringing other nations within its fold. One need only open the pages of history to come to an entirely different conclusion. It is quite natural that the Jews, while their own lives were threatened by persecution, and when the conversion of a Gentile might have brought dire punishment on the whole community, should have refrained from carrying on religious propaganda.

Not so, however, in olden times, and under circumstances favorable to Jewish missionary activity. Then they displayed eagerness for propagating the word of God, and for lifting the nations out of the slough of materialism. They were thus continuing the work which had begun with the inception of Judaism in the Holy Land. One can readily find, in the records of Holy Writ, the idea of universal religion propounded by the prophets, who drew pictures of mankind's future when all the nations would assemble in Zion to worship the God of Israel: "In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew saying, 'We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you'" (Zech. viii. 23). "And on that day the Lord will be One, and His name be One" (Zech. xiv. 19). One can add many similar passages. Even when Solomon dedicated the Temple, he said: "And should a stranger come from a distant land, and pray, then God shall hearken to his prayer, that all the peoples of the earth shall know and fear God" (I Kings viii. 41). God's temple was to be opened to all the nations without distinction.

We find at the very beginning of our history the promise given to Abraham that "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in thee" (Gen. xii. 3). His descendants were to be means of spreading this divine blessing among all the nations of the world. Ruth the Moabite is the ancestress of David, and thus of the future Messiah. What more powerful example could prove the universal conception of

Judaism? The prophet Elisha converts to Judaism the Syrian general Naaman, miraculously cured of leprosy. The messages sent by the prophets, were they not apostolic epistles from those who propagated the word of God and the fear of Him to the heathen nations and kings? Was not Jonah a real apostle, divinely sent to the people of Nineveh, foretelling their doom if they would not turn from their sinful ways? He speaks with the authority and in the name of the God of Israel, and the people, accepting his message, are saved thereby.

Jewish prophets then could be sent on such a mission and were in fact going out to wean the world from its idolatrous ways. Judaism always preached and still preaches simple, sane doctrines which appeal to the human heart, without obscuring the mind by mystical illusions or eschatological terrors. It is no wonder, therefore, that Judaism, coming in contact with other creeds, has not only been able to hold its own, but, in addition, has exercised a deep influence on the others. How far Parsism, in spite of dualistic conceptions, is indebted to Judaism, may be a matter of dispute to scholars; but that Judaism has had a great share in it can scarcely be doubted when one remembers the vast number of Jews carried away into exile and settled in the very heart of the country of Zoroastrianism. Deep and lasting must have been the influence of the Jewish exiles, including in all probability the ten tribes, who must have retained the Pentateuch and, no doubt, many other portions of our Bible. Whithersoever they went and settled they formed religious centers, we may believe, and directly as well as indi-

rectly carried out an intense propaganda, the traces of which we may find in the numerous sects that arose there in after time. This should hold true also for those exiles that went with the prophet Jeremiah into Egypt, and those that found refuge in the wilds of Arabia. We shall find them again later in describing the results of their propaganda among the nations.

Palestinian Propaganda

But to turn again to Palestine. There, those who had returned from the exile were so few, and so surrounded by powerful hostile nations, that their first interest lay in reëstablishing their sanctuary and consolidating their position. Yet amidst all these difficulties, in times fraught with so many dangers, the prophet not only sees the name of God honored among the nations, but he adds, "Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?" (Mal. ii. 10). Can there be a more universalistic pronouncement than this?

As soon as the small Judean state had grown able to hold its own against the others, a new factor came into the life of the Jews, nay, of all the East, which was destined to change the face of the world. The conquest of Asia by Alexander the Great (d. 323 B.C.E.), marks a turning point in the history of civilization. It brought in its train the destruction of the spiritual values of the Oriental world and an attempt to replace them by Greek forms and Greek ideas. Other religions succumbed. Judaism alone took up the challenge and brought the fight on into the enemy's camp. In the long-drawn-out

battle Judaism came forth victorious, and thus saved the world from spiritual dissolution. This victory is symbolically expressed in an old story which tells of the meeting of King Alexander and the Jewish high priest of Jerusalem. Enraged by the refusal of the Jews to submit, Alexander came toward Jerusalem with the intention of destroying it. The high priest, arrayed in his holy vestments, came out to meet him. When Alexander beheld the priest approaching, he dismounted from his horse and bent his knee before him. Asked by the astonished generals what this meant, he replied, "I have seen the image of this man in a vision before the decisive battle and he promised me victory."

A large number of Jews followed in the train of Alexander and were settled by him in Alexandria, to which he had given his name. A new Jewish element was thus added to the older one, and the war against Greek civilization, in its decayed and depraved form, was carried on for centuries between the Jews and those who followed the new creeds. Indeed, a statue of Zeus had been erected in the very precincts of the Temple. But the Hasmoneans soon put an end to this, and a stronger Judaism rose from the ruins of Hellenism. On the one hand the Temple, and with it every Jewish house and home, was purified from the Greek pollution; on the other hand, a *spiritual warfare* was carried on by the translation of the Bible into Greek. An ancient legend tells us that, when Abraham went down to Egypt, all the temples shook and their idols fell to the ground and were shattered. This was precisely the effect which the Greek translation of the Bible pro-

duced on the heathen nations. Their magnificent temples shook in their foundations and the statues of their gods were shattered into pieces. The light of the Temple lamp, lit anew by the Hasmoneans, pierced the darkness, and the light of the Divine Word dissipated the spiritual gloom which had settled upon the world. With the Bible, written in the language understood by most of the people of the time, the Jew again entered upon a period of propaganda which lasted for several centuries, and which in truth led up to the foundation of Christianity.

This may seem to us a retrogade step, but, as Maimonides explains, Christianity came into the world not to supersede Judaism, but, on the contrary, to prepare the nations steeped in idolatry for the highest conceptions of truth and faith embodied in Judaism. A large number of Greek-speaking people, however, either adopted Judaism or felt themselves so attracted by it that they Judaized themselves, trying to approximate their life and habits to the tenets of Judaism. Some of these shrank from the physical sacrifice demanded by the covenant of Abraham and the strict observance of the laws concerning food and the Sabbath. They did, however, accept the fundamental principles of the unity of God, the vanity of idolatry, and the ethical teachings of the Bible. It has been said that Judaism had made so many converts in the Roman Empire at the time of the birth of Christianity that one out of every fifteen inhabitants was either a Jew or a Judaizer. One small step more, and they would all have been Jews in the fullest sense.

Propaganda in Judea

In Judea, we find that King Hyrcanus, after he had subjugated the Edomites, forced them to embrace Judaism. It must be mentioned, however, that this is the only case known in history in which people have been forced to become Jews. Throughout the ages, and on all the other occasions of which mention will be made, conversion was obtained by means of persuasion. We find the Rabbis at that time favorably disposed to accepting proselytes, which was considered a meritorious act. It is more than an accident that not a few of our prominent teachers and sages are described as descended from proselytes. This is true of the famous Rabbi Meir and the no less renowned Rabbi Akiba, the hero of the Bar-Kochba war, whom Jewish tradition has compared in greatness with Moses himself. The Emperor Nero, who has become a somewhat mystical figure in ancient lore, is declared in the Talmud to have refused to attack Jerusalem, and, departing, to have embraced Judaism. Rabbi Meir is said to have been one of his descendants. Shemaya and Abtalion, the more ancient fathers of the synagogue, are also believed descendants of proselytes; and not a few proselytes knocked at the doors of Shammai and Hillel requesting acceptance as Jews.

Many more examples could be culled from the pages of the Talmud, where a special small treatise has been dedicated to proselytes. The esteem in which they were held is further demonstrated by the fact that a special blessing was composed in their

honor, and included in the eighteen blessings, recited thrice daily. One of the most distinguished proselytes is believed to have been Onkelos (Aquila), who translated the Scriptures into Greek, and who was the author of the famous Aramaic version of the Bible, which goes by the name of *Targum Onkelos.* He came from the district of Pontus, where he owned large estates. Even more distinguished was the proselyte Flavius Clemens, and his wife, Flavia Domitilla. Besides being related to the Emperor Domitian, he was a member of the Senate and a Consul. It is said that he once asked the Emperor's advice as to the principles upon which he should conduct commerce. "Buy things when they are depreciated and sell them when they are dear," was the reply. When it came to the emperor's ears that his cousin had embraced Judaism, he asked why he had taken this step. "I followed your advice," said Flavius. "What could be more depreciated at the present time than the Jewish religion? Therefore, I have made it my own, for the time will surely come when it will be widely esteemed as it is now despised." This answer irritated Domitian, who condemned him to death, while his wife Domitilla was punished with exile. Another proselyte of eminence was Epaphroditos, a learned Greek, for whom Josephus wrote his history of Jewish *Antiquities,* a mine of valuable information on Jewish topics.

Spreading Out

The seed was sown far and wide. Not only was the Roman Empire covered with settlements of Jews, but Jewish communities flourished far beyond

its borders. Masses of Jews had settled in many parts of the ancient world, and everywhere we discover traces of their indomitable spirit and great missionary activity. The Jews, with the Bible and the word of God, were able to purify the life of the nations who had been poisoned by the debased Greek civilization, which had fallen like mildew on the beliefs and practices of the people of the near East. The nations have left only ruins behind them, but under these ruins lie many temples and synagogues erected by the Jews in various countries. The wave of persecution then started submerged much of the activity and much of the progress achieved in olden times. It is very difficult to piece together the few scattered fragments which have escaped destruction. As making converts became a criminal act carrying with it capital punishment, the records of conversion became very scarce. To this fact we owe the prevailing fallacy that Judaism is merely a tribal or national faith, without aspirations to become a world creed. Yet sufficient material has been saved to allow us to draw an outline, the details of which will have to be completed by further investigation.

Arabia

Of the countries bordering on Palestine we may start with Arabia, whither the remnants of the followers of Gedaliah fled after his violent death (582 B.C.E.). They probably followed earlier streams of Jewish migration to that country under the stress of persecution.

We are accustomed to speak of Arabia as a desert. The northwestern portion, over which the Israelites

wandered in their early history, presents this character, but not the southern coast. A Jewish savant, as well as a host of later scholars, has shown that southern Arabia in early times was the seat of a powerful kingdom. It was either the original home or cradle of human civilization, or it acted as an intermediary between Babylon and Egypt, though whether civilization flowed through southern Arabia from north to south or in the contrary direction is becoming more and more difficult to decide. The people who lived in southern Arabia were also in early times in close connection with India through the Persian Gulf, since it formed the center of trade between India and Africa.

The inhabitants of Southern Arabia were believed to be to a large extent Sabeans, or star-worshipers. Their monuments were built so as to represent the positions of the stars at certain times. The Bible records that King Solomon fitted out a fleet which started from Eziongeber, a port of the Red Sea, to fetch gold from Ophir. Where was this Ophir? It is a most interesting question and one which has engaged many minds. It can hardly have been, as it is supposed by some, in India, whence Solomon imported elephants' tusks, apes, and peacocks, because there is no reason to suppose that India could have supplied gold in such quantities as are referred to in Holy Writ. The gold was in all probability brought from Africa, from the region of Mashonaland, where at the present day there are remains of ancient diggings and the ruins of an ancient civilization. These Zimbabwe ruins have been studied by Theodore Bent and others, and

examination has showed that the builders followed the direction of certain stars in the disposition of their conical towers and monoliths. Hence, there is reason to suppose that the mine owners in this region were Sabeans, and must have crossed over into Africa from Southern Arabia. This would explain how the Queen of Sheba came to know of Solomon.

The relations between Southern Arabia and Palestine never ceased. During the entire period of the second Temple Arabic tribes were interfering in Palestinian politics, and the Maccabean princes often came in contact with them. It was in Southern Arabia that the valiant warriors of Simon ben Giora took refuge after the fall of Jerusalem. There were established various small tribes such as the Benu Nadshi, the Kainukoa, and the Beni-Koraiza, who lived an independent life in Jathrib. Southern Arabia was accessible through the southern part of Assyria, along the coast of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. In the time of Yezdegird and Firuz, many Jews from Babylon fled thither to escape persecution. That was in the fifth century. But many centuries before, during the existence of the Temple, King Monobas and his queen Helen, as well as Monobas II, rulers of Adiabene, a province on the banks of the Tigris, were converted to Judaism by Anania, a certain trader from the south coast of Arabia. They came to the Temple and built a monument outside of Jerusalem, the ruins of which remain to the present day and are known as the Tombs of the Kings. The story of Monobas laying up treasures in heaven (which is perhaps reflected

in his name "Manah-Baz") has been borrowed by the New Testament and put into the mouth of Jesus. At the beginning of the sixth century, a powerful king of Yemen, Abu-Kariba, was converted to Judaism by two Jewish sages, Kaab and Assad. Of Abu Kariba's successors the most renowned was Yussuf Dhu-nowas (Yussuf of the locked-head). He defended the Jews who were persecuted in the Byzantine Empire, and in retaliation punished a Christian rebel, the Prince of Najaran, in Yemen. This was the origin of the mythical Christian martyrs of Yemen. A monk, assisted by the Syrian Bishop Simeon, besought the power of the Emperor Justinian on the Jewish scholars of Tiberias to use their influence with the Himyaritic king, Yussuf Dhunowas, to cease his persecutions of the Christians. This fact shows that, long after the Talmud was closed, Tiberias continued to be the center of learning in Palestine and extended its influence over Arabia. It was because there was never any interruption of communication between Arabia and Palestine that the Jewish tribes in the former country retained the literature of "The People of the Book."

The Career of Mohammed

The profound significance of all this is seen in the career of Mohammed and the origin of Mohammedanism. Mohammed was much attracted by the learning of the Arabian Jews and the songs of their poets. These Jews were faithful to the ceremonies of Judaism, the Sabbath, the feasts, and the fasts, and they expected the advent of the Messiah.

Mohammed at first labored hard to get himself accepted by the Jews as their Messiah. He borrowed freely from the Bible and mingled the Biblical stories with Rabbinical legends, after the manner of the Arabian Jews. The best portions of the Koran are those which are taken from the Bible and from Rabbinical traditions. He likewise borrowed from other Israelitish traditions—perhaps remnants of the Northern tribes had settled in the country and exercised an added influence. It was only when the Jews refused to accept him as a prophet that he turned against them. Some of the true Jews must have continued in Southern Arabia, following their old life of independence, notwithstanding the rise and progress of Mohammedanism. And once Jews have occupied a land they have rarely altogether disappeared from it. In the ninth century the mysterious traveler, Eldad the Danite, who probably came from the Persian Gulf, had heard of independent Jewish tribes, the king of whom was one "Yussuf." The memory of a Jewish kingdom must thus have been kept alive in the ninth century by a number of Jewish descendants in Arabia. The famous letter to the Yemenites (Iggereth Teman) sent some three centuries later by Maimonides, in reply to a question which had been addressed to him relative to a false Messiah among them, proves that there must have been a community of Jews in Yemen in the twelfth century. Arabic life was thus deeply influenced and molded by the tenets of Judaism, which for many centuries were partially preached in three parts of the globe.

Abyssinia

Abyssinia is exactly opposite Yemen and Sanaah, the capital of Southern Arabia. It was in direct communication with Southern Arabia, and also in partial communication with Egypt, through Khartoum. It is not improbable that Jews penetrated into Abyssinia from both directions and there converted the largest part of the original inhabitants to Judaism. They probably came from Egypt and from Southern Arabia—because their ritual is partly sacrificial (the Alexandrian Jews were in the habit of offering sacrifices) and partly Rabbinical, which may have resulted from the influence of the Jews of Arabia, who were intimately connected with Palestine and Babylon. The Jews of Abyssinia are known as "Falashas." Very little is known of their early history. But Judaism must have flourished in Abyssinia from ancient times. Immigrant Jews brought with them a rich Biblical literature, resting upon Hebrew originals, into the old Geez—the Book of Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, and other apocryphal writings which at the time of their introduction into Abyssinia must have been regarded as canonical. From the tenth century there flourished a powerful Jewish dynasty founded by a woman named Judith; and even after the fall of this dynasty the Jews continued to exercise great power. But their great enemies were first the Arabs, who had seized the Abyssinian littoral for themselves, and then the Turks, who brought Abyssinia to the verge of destruction. The most renowned fable of the Middle Ages—that of Prester John—which originated in

Asia, where there was likewise an Abyssinian kingdom, was transplanted to Abyssinia in Africa. The story circulated among Jews as well as Christians, and the story of the Jewish king, Joseph, reminding one as it does of Jussuf Dhu-nowas of Yemen in the sixth century, may have been applied to the Jewish kings of the tenth century in Abyssinia.

One may here refer to the strange mission of David Reubeni in the sixteenth century, who visited Portugal and Rome and tried to induce the Pope to drive the Turks out of the Holy Land. How could the Christian powers have believed this story? And why should he wish to make war on the Mohammedans, whose treatment of the Jews had, on the whole, been so liberal? But the problem is solved if we regard him as an emissary of the Falashas in Abyssinia, who desired to free themselves from the domination of the Arabs and the Turks. Jews still live in Abyssinia, but they are persecuted and little is known about them. But sufficient is known to confirm the inference from other facts that wherever Jews have taken root they have never altogether relapsed into paganism.

Egypt

In Egypt the papyri discovered in Assuan prove the existence of Jewish colonies, or rather military colonies already settled in the time of Darius. A large number of Jews also lived in Upper Egypt, increasing after the foundation of Alexandria. Their influence is felt throughout the Hellenistic literature, and the number of converts in that part of the world must have been very great. There were keen

conflicts between Jews and Greeks for many centuries, but the rise of Christianity, and especially the activity of the fanatical monks, who tore Hypatia to pieces, and who brought about the burning of the famous library of Alexandria, must have put a definite stop to Jewish propaganda. Incidentally, the story of the burning of the library has been twisted to put the blame on the followers of Islam. The monks also would not tolerate conversion to Judaism, but the ancient Jewish settlements in the south of Egypt show some similarity to the form of Judaism accepted by the Abyssinians; and it is therefore not at all unlikely, although their activity was checked toward the north, that Jews continued to be missionaries of their faith among the nations in the south of Egypt. In this manner, they prepared them for the acceptance of Christianity and of Islam, having weaned them from their former rank idolatry.

Out of Arabia

The Jews of Arabia, travelers and traders, were not satisfied merely with carrying their propaganda westward, but extended it to the east. In their packs and in their ships they carried the Bible, and as early as the middle of the eighth century a number of them, under the leadership of an Isuppu (Joseph) Rabban, followed the coastline to what is now known as Cranganore. They were kindly received by the reigning king, who granted them a charter of freedom of faith and gave them some land. There they settled and multiplied. A number of inhabitants were converted. They continued to flourish through-

out the ages, Benjamin of Tudela found them there in the middle of the twelfth century (1167) and later on, when the Portuguese inquisition started its auto-da-fe, the Jews fled to Cochin. Their number was so great that the king of Cochin is mentioned as the king of the Jews. Their descendants have persisted to this very day.

If we should follow indications of Arabian navigators and historians, the Jews did not stop at Craganore. They went as far as China. And here they were probably met by another current of migration and propaganda coming on land and carried by caravans to the heart of China. The history of the Jews in China has still to be written. There is, however, no doubt that the Jews developed there, and the settlement in Kaifongfu still attests thereto.

Among the Afghans

Retracing our steps through the continent of Asia, we come upon the inhabitants of the country now called Afghanistan. The Afghans called themselves Bani-Israel (children of Israel) and many of their leading families trace their ancestry to Jews. Jews stand at the head of the long genealogical trees they have preserved. There, apparently, we have the descendants of Jewish converts to whom Judaism had been brought by the Bani-Israel from the Babylonian Exile. They had not far to travel, and, were it not for the forcible conversion of the Afghans to Islam, who knows whether at this very day we might not have found there a large population that had embraced Judaism and clung to it? Whoever sees the gaunt figure of a bearded Afghan, with his

sidelocks and the peculiar aquiline nose and pronounced features, will have to be persuaded ere he believes that he has not an Oriental Jew before him. The type is unmistakable.

The Lost Tribes

I have thus far described the extension of the teaching of Judaism among nations like the Greeks and Romans, which belong to the Aryan stock, and among the Semitic peoples of Arabia and elsewhere. I will now endeavor to show how it made its way among the Turanian peoples. The quest of the Lost Ten Tribes is a problem whose solution has haunted the minds of Jews and non-Jews ever since the time of the second Temple. The Bible states that when the king of Assyria took Samaria he "carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and in Harbor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." When the two tribes of Judah returned to Palestine from the captivity in Babylon, no doubt some of the Ten Tribes accompanied them, but as the Bible only mentions the return of a few the great majority must have remained behind. Where are they to be found? The question has already been mooted in the Apocryphal book Esdras IV where it is replied that they were living in "Azareth." This "Azareth" is simply another form of Erets Ahereth, the "other land," to which, in Deut. xxix. 27, it is said God would cast out Israel. No doubt most of them had been transported to the eastern part of the old Babylonian Empire, which may be identified in the present day with Afghanistan, Persia, and the surrounding countries just referred

to. It was certain that descendants of the Jews or Ten Tribes were sprinkled all over Asia Minor. They were to be found in ancient times in Pontus, Cappadocia, and Phrygia. The Talmud speaks of Akiba and others traveling to those parts in order to excite the Jews to assert their freedom. Theodotion, the Greek translator of the Bible, came from Pontus. In that neighborhood probably existed the Sepharad, to which the prophet Obadiah refers as a place where the Jews were held in captivity. Josephus speaks of the Jews living near the Black Sea. If Jews or descendants of the Ten Tribes were scattered over Asia Minor and the shores of the Black Sea, it is probable that they crossed the sea and settled in the South of Russia—in the Crimea and the surrounding places.

In this connection the story of Eldad, the Danite, is of importance. This traveler, who styled himself a descendant of one of the Ten Tribes, professed to have come in contact with four of these tribes, whom he described as dwelling in the northern parts of Asia Minor (Armenia, Pontus, etc.). There were the reputed gates of Alexander the Great, and behind them, according to some accounts, Jewish tribes were hemmed in. This also points to the existence of Jews in the Crimea, and that fact is further confirmed by tombstones found in the Crimea by the Karaite Firkowitch and by Chwolson. Even if these inscriptions were altered, in the main they were genuine enough to attest the antiquity of the Jewish settlements in these regions.

About the middle of the fifth century a remarkable movement seized the nations of Central Asia.

Whether it was due to the downfall of the great Asiatic power, or to other causes, nation after nation swarmed through Russia and Hungary and thence swept over the rest of Europe. The most celebrated inroads were those of the Huns under Attila, of the Avars, and finally those of the Magyars, in the ninth century. Among the early invaders were nations of the Turanian type, of which the Turks are one class and the Magyars or Hungarians another. Ethnically speaking, the Bulgarians belong to the same nationality, but they soon mixed with the Slavs in the Balkan peninsula and in time became completely absorbed in them.

The Chazars

One of the best known of these Turanian tribes were the Chazars, who inhabited the south of Russia. The Chazars were a brave and much-dreaded people, who waged many successful wars with the Greeks and Persians and held their own for many a century. Under the influence of the Jews who inhabited the shores of the Black Sea, the rulers of the Chazars and a large part of the population embraced the Jewish faith. It so happened that in the tenth century ambassadors from Constantinople had come to the court of the Mohammedan ruler in Cordova, where Chasdai ibn Shaprut filled the office of Grand Vizier. From them Chasdai heard of a Jewish Empire in the East to which many nations were subject and to which even the Byzantine Empire paid tribute. The news tallied exactly with that contained in the travels of Eldad the Danite. Chasdai thereupon wrote a letter, which is still extant, in which he said

that two scholars—Rabbi Judah ben Meier ben Nathan and Rabbi Joseph—had appeared in Spain and asserted that they had been at the court of a Jewish king of the Chazars to whom many nations were subject. Their news was corroborated by merchants from Chorasan, but he did not believe them, thinking they told him these tales for the purpose of gaining his good opinion. Then came Byzantine ambassadors, who told him that they were in frequent communication with the Chazars. Thereupon Chasdai resolved to send a messenger via Constantinople, to whom he gave letters of introduction to the emperor in Byzantium. He selected for this office a certain Yitzchak bar Nathan, who agreed if necessary to risk his life in the mission. He was, however, detained six months in Constantinople by the Byzantine emperor and had to return to Spain without having carried out his mission. Chasdai then made up his mind to dispatch his letter to the Chazars via Jerusalem and Armenia, but in the meanwhile an embassy came from the king of the Gebalim (Gauls) accompanied by two Jews—Mar Shaul and Mar Joseph—who on hearing of Chasdai's desire undertook to forward his letter to the Jews in Hungary, who would hand it on to those in Russia, and they, in their turn, would transfer it to the Bulgars on the Volga, who would send it to the king of the Chazars.

The letter thus reached its destination and ultimately Chasdai received a reply. It was to this effect. The king tells him that his nation is derived from Yafeth, and then from Togarmah, who had ten sons, one of whom was named Chazar, two of the

others being named Bulgar and Avar. One of the kings, called Bulan, once had a remarkable dream. He was a good man, though a heathen, and an angel appeared to him in the night with a message that God had heard his prayers and would lead him in the right path. At the request of the king, the same message was given by the angel to a certain great man, and both declared their intention to the people, and they all embraced the Jewish religion. With divine assistance he was enabled to build a great temple similar to that at Jerusalem. The Greek emperor and the Mohammedan keliph sent their representative to convert the king to their beliefs. The manner in which he convinced them of the superiority of the religion he had embraced was ingenious. He first asked the Christian which of the two was preferable—Mohammedanism or Judaism—and in which book he placed the greater confidence—the Koran or the Bible. The answer was that Judaism, being the fountainhead, was in every way preferable. He received the same answer from the Mohammedan, who was asked whether he would prefer Christianity to Judaism. He thus convinced them out of their own mouths that he had chosen the best religion. The king then described the number of kings who had succeeded Bulan, from which it appears that he was the twelfth descendant from the first convert of Judaism. He also mentions the establishment of schools, *bate hamidrash,* and synagogues. Then follows a description of the country and the power wielded by him.

This country was situated on the river Itil (now the Volga), and extended to the Black Sea, which

for a long time afterwards continued to be called the Sea of Chazaria. Some skeptics have endeavored to throw doubts on the story of the conversion of the Chazars to Judaism, and on the authenticity of these letters. But it must be borne in mind that a number of independent Arabic writers, some of whom had been in the country itself, all speak of the Judaism of the ruling classes among the Chazars. As the letter dates from the tenth century, according to the statement of the king, the conversion must have taken place about two hundred and fifty years previously, and this tallies with the statements of the Arabic writers. This would mean the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century.

In the eleventh century the power of the Chazars was finally broken. Sarkel, Itil, and Semender were successively occupied by the princes of Kiev. The remnant of these Jewish converts partly settled in the Crimea and partly joined the Magyars in their march westward.

We may, therefore, recognize their descendants among the Karaites of the Crimea. Their language appears to have survived in the purely Tartaric dialect spoken by the Karaites. A peculiar fragment of the Bible, written in remarkable characters, has come down to modern times, and is preserved in Leningrad. I am inclined to recognize therein the script used by the Chazars. As to the letters that passed between Chasdai and the king, the fact that Jehuda Halevi, who lived a century later, based his great poetical and philosophical work—the *Cuzari*—on them, showed that they were well known and believed in his time, the middle of the

twelfth century. There are, besides, many points in these letters which bespeak their authenticity. Their accurate geographical knowledge of these regions, the relations between the Chazars and other Turanian nations, the form used to denote prayer books (*chazanya*), the route taken by the letter and its final delivery through a Jew from Nemetz (Germany)—all are proofs of the genuineness of the story. Many of the Jewish Chazars, who joined the Magyar invaders of Eastern Europe, became knights who owned their own castles and lived apart from the other Jews of Hungary. But slowly they became converted to Christianity, and many of the Christian peoples of Eastern Europe to-day are doubtless the descendants of Jews and Jewish converts.

In Christian Lands

Judaism early made its way even among Christian peoples. So long as Christianity was a tolerated or persecuted religion Judaism had an easy task of spreading itself. It was when Christianity became the religion of the state that it employed its power to vanquish every other religion. Judaism then had to give way before its more powerful rival. Still, in Spain, France, and many other countries, when the power of the Church was not yet great, Christians manifested a desire to adopt Jewish customs. Not a few were converted to Judaism, which at that time they could do without danger of losing their lives. Many councils inveighed against such practices and threatened the followers with excommunication and other punishment. The decrees of Byzantine emperors and Gothic kings in Spain are

all directed to the same purpose of heading off possible Jewish propaganda among the people.

But though the Jews were stopped in their missionary activities, there was their Holy Book which carried the message of the true God and His sublime Law among the masses. That light could not be quenched and it burned all through the darkness of the Middle Ages. A pall had fallen over Europe, spread by representatives of the Church—for it must not be supposed that Christianity during the Middle Ages always made for civilization. We are only now beginning to renew that intellectual life which was so frequently destroyed by monk and priest. But even in the Middle Ages many a liberal mind chafed under the rule of the Church—it is the Church rather than the Christian religion that was responsible—and these drew their inspiration from the teaching of Judaism embodied in the Holy Writ. It was in such a wise that Judaism made itself felt and worked as a spiritual leaven throughout the ages. Hence arose those innumerable movements which were called "heresies" by the Church. The "heresy" consisted, in most cases, in protesting against certain dogmas and actions of the Church, but sometimes it involved the negation of fundamentals. A great many of these so-called heresies rested upon Judaism and the Bible, and it is mostly with such that we have to deal. Where Judaism pure and simple was unable to penetrate, it often acted destructively upon the doctrines of the ruling Church and brought the people nearer to the truth than they were before. These heretical sects were always in harmonious relations with the Jews, who

never suffered persecution at their hands. We can infer this from the manner in which the Christian clergy denounced the sects whenever they spoke of them.

Sects and "Heresies"

Starting from the East, we come across the Bogomils, with their peculiar dualistic tenets. They were the successors of the old Manicheans, who believed that the world was ruled by an evil as well as a good power, and that both powers ought to be worshiped, this belief in an evil power being the outcome of the Christian dogma that the world is a vale of tears and that mankind is exposed to the temptations of the devil. The Bogomils formed large communities in Bulgaria, and in many of their practices and principles they approached the Jewish religion, while various Judaizing sects were the result of their intercourse with Bulgarian Jews between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. The Bulgarian tsar, John Alexander (1331-1362), married a Jewess, and although she was afterwards converted to Christianity the Jews and Jewish sects became so prominent at that time that the clergy had to convoke a special synod to combat them. It has taken centuries to eradicate the heretics there, some of whom, out of opposition to the Greek Church, embraced Catholicism, whilst others embraced Islam, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The germs of Judaism also remained in Russia, which furnished a fruitful field for heretical sects. Already in the year 1004, shortly after Russians had become converted to Christianity, a certain Adrian preached with success against the Church, its dogmas

and forms. In 1125 the work was continued by one Dmitr, who established a Free Church and denied the fundamental dogmas of Christianity. They both based their opposition on the teaching of the Bible. With new vigor the fight against the Church was undertaken by Seit and Strignolnik in 1371. This movement started from Novgorod, where it had taken such deep root and undergone so profound a change, that when Scharya (Zacharia) came to Novgorod with the new governor, Prince Olelkovich, in 1471, he started the famous sect of Judaisantes. Scharya came from Kiev, bringing many Jews with him, and together they grafted many Jewish forms on the heretical doctrines professed by the great mass of the people. Even archbishops were led to embrace this semi-Judaism, such as Zosima, of Moscow, and many of the lower clergy. The followers of this new movement spread over Russia, and hence arose the sect of Subotniki or Sabbatarians. The most pronounced representatives of this new form of faith, which closely resembled pure Judaism, were Semenov Bashkin and Theodossi Kisii (1520-1555). Whenever they had an opportunity, the Sabbatarians became full Jews. In spite of persecution which had lasted many a century they held fast to their beliefs, and only waited for an opportunity to throw off the yoke of the Church. A number of them emigrated to the Holy Land some forty years ago and settled among Jewish colonies. I visited them in my journey through the Holy Land, and it was interesting to watch how the parents who spoke only Russian were delighted to see their children beginning to speak and read

Hebrew. That leaven worked on, and we find that many other sects of a similar character developed more fully in Russia. Besides other forces which were then at work, Protestantism, Quakerism, and Lutheranism of various degrees found their way thither, some of these forms of religion being favored by Peter the Great. Still they all took as their basis the teaching of the Bible and the practices of the Jews. Thus arose the sects known originally as Molokani and Duhobori, and as Stundists. Many of their beliefs, too, were far removed from the dogmas of the Church.

From the Jews, again the guardians of the undiluted Word of God, other European sects also derived instruction and drew the weapons with which they combated the Church. Bogomilism spread quickly to the West of Europe, and many a peculiar religious movement can be explained if studied in connection with the Bogomils and similar sects. Of the utmost significance in connection with the history of Jews and Jewish literature were the so-called Albigenses in the south of France. There they lived in harmonious relations with the Jews, from whom they learned how to attack the weak points of the Papal doctrine. The chief book on which the schismatics relied was the Bible. In consequence, therefore, of the great ignorance displayed by the clergy, and their inability to defend themselves against the attacks of the well-read heretics, the reading of the Bible was forbidden to the Catholics, a prohibition which has continued in force almost down to the present day. Only the exercise of brute force could break down the arguments employed by men who

represented the movement of the free spirit in an age of darkness and blind faith. Behind the Albigenses and the Waldenses stood the principles of Judaism, through whose agency the Reformation was being slowly prepared. Those sects maintained the old protest against subjecting the human mind to the command of the Curia at Rome. At a late time an attempt was made not merely to suppress the Bible so far as the Catholics were concerned, but also to mutilate it and subject it to the censorship of Rome. The Reformation, which was a protest against such attempts, was thus the natural outcome of the existence of the other sects. One may also trace the rise of Unitarianism to the influence of Judaism, as propagated by the Jews, who never attempted to snatch souls like other proselytizing agencies, but rather sought to open the eyes of the whole world to the truth.

The Sabbatarians

We may well note here what happened in that country to which the last remnants of the Chazars (and with them probably some Jews) had fled. No doubt the latter contingent increased in consequence of the persecutions which began in the fourteenth century, after the Synod in Bulgaria took action against them. They all flocked to south Hungary, the province known as Transylvania. In that corner of Europe there was a curious mixture of races and beliefs, the more so as the Turks, with their accustomed tolerance, never interfered with the religion of their subjects. Here the field was prepared for a freer religious movement. Lutheranism and Uni-

tarianism were embraced in turns by the masses. Judaism also had its missionaries there. Jewish doctrines were not altogether similar to the teaching of Unitarianism, which was solely a protest against the ruling doctrine of the Church and was definitely anti-Trinitarian. Persecuted elsewhere, some of the adherents of these views found refuge in Poland, and then in Transylvania under the rule of John Sigismund. One of the first proselytes was Franz Dividis, a Catholic priest, who finally found salvation in the word of the Bible alone. In 1566 he founded the Unitarian Church of Transylvania. Soon this Church became the object of persecution and Davidis died as a martyr. The activity of Davidis was not lost on the people; on the contrary, it stimulated latent forces and directly brought about the rise of the great Sabbatarian movement. Led, in the first place, by a resolute man, Andreas Eossi (1588-1623), it spread rapidly and gained many adherents.

Meanwhile, in addition to the older inhabitants, an influx of Spanish Jews took place. These were the descendants of the Jews that had emigrated from Spain and settled in Turkey. Through the influence of Donna Gracia Mendes and Don Joseph Nasi, of Naxos, a Roumanian Vovod is said to have been appointed to rule over one of the provinces, and one of these Vovods, called Aaron, is believed to have been a Jew himself. At that time, Roumania was under the domination of the Turks, as was also a large part of Transylvania. Andreas Eossi adopted as his son a certain Simon Pechi, a man of extraordinary talents and a great scholar, who rose after-

wards to the dignity of governor or chancellor of Transylvania. He embraced the Sabbatarian creed and became very nearly a Jew but he had to suffer for it. He was put into prison, from which he escaped and fled to Turkey, possibly aided by the Spanish Jews, with whom he had become intimately acquainted. It is said that he worked as a compositor in the Jewish printing-house established by Donna Gracia in Kuru Tcheshme, near Constantinople. He became a great Hebrew scholar and either translated or revised the Prayer Book into Hungarian, following entirely the Sephardic ritual as well as the Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew. Then Prince George Racoczi, instigated by the Christian clergy, and looking for rich spoil from the Sabbatarians, undertook another kind of crusade. He destroyed the Sabbatarians in 1638 as far as he could, confiscated their property, and condemned the followers to death. Pechi himself was also imprisoned, and he died not long afterwards, having lost his entire family. Yet, in spite of this persecution, Sabbatarianism was not entirely crushed. A new kind of Marannos was then created, for with great tenacity they secretly kept the Jewish practices and, although reduced in number, survived the innumerable persecutions to which they were exposed, until in 1868 they were enabled publicly to embrace Judaism.

Close upon forty years ago I visited the center of these Jewish Sabbatarians in Bozod-Ujfalu, and there I had the privilege of meeting the old heroic martyr Kovachi, who, by sheer miracle, had survived the tortures inflicted upon her for the sake of her

Jewish faith. Then already an old woman, she still bore the traces of that inquisition, and it was in her house, at the early dawn of day, that I overheard in an adjacent room the Hebrew prayers recited by her grandson to his father.

Conclusion

With this, this brief sketch, which I have brought down to our own days, must come to an end. The fathers who listen to the Hebrew prayers recited by the sons, and the sons who recite them to the God of Israel and who learn to follow the teachings of our holy Bible, are harbingers of the great mission of Israel, to spread the name of God and His holy law. Not that the scattering of Israel is to be taken as the means of carrying out that mission; it is the scattering of the word of God which is to be carried out, and this can be done best only if it radiates from one center—"For from Zion shall go out the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

VII

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION AND THE FAITH OF THE JEW

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VII

THEORY OF EVOLUTION

I

Plan and Purpose

Inasmuch as many of my readers will have only an elementary idea of the theory of evolution, it will be necessary to give a careful explanation of the theory itself. What is more important, it will be essential to separate actual facts from theory. We shall treat the subject entirely from a scientific point of view without reference to our own tradition. The interests of religion are best served when such problems are dealt with by science. We shall see that what scientific criticism leaves of evolution is quite a modest and unassuming theory.

An analysis such as this one, although made without reference to religion, is of the greatest importance for orthodox Jewry. Those who put most faith in empirical science must of necessity listen to the arguments based on empirical science. Discussions based upon religious ideas appeal to a relatively small minority and, besides, are hardly adequate for a problem of this sort, inasmuch as they employ what might be called a different unit of measure. Furthermore, the interpretation of our

authoritative writings is a difficult matter, to which we shall refer later on. Our method therefore will be first, to present a criticism or analysis of our subject based on science, and then, to attempt a sketch of the traditional point of view.

Historical

The principle underlying the theory of evolution is well known. It supposes that our present-day species, genera, and other groups are the result of a development of so-called higher forms of life from lower. Whether all are descended from a single ancestor, or from a number of original forms, is a question as yet unanswered by science.

Long before the idea had become scientific there were occasional philosophers who entertained thoughts about evolution. It is hardly worth while to mention these by name, even Empedocles (400 B.C.E.) having spoken in a vague way of a theory of descent. Leibnitz (1646-1716) was the first, however, who made the theory assume a definite importance among scientists, although its acceptance was delayed for some time in the field of zoölogy and botany. This delay was due to the influence of Cuvier and Linnaeus, who championed the invariability of species, notwithstanding the fact that so great a man as Geoffrey St. Hilaire had already rejected the doctrine of fixity.

At the beginning of the last century, in 1809 (the year of Darwin's birth), there appeared the work of Lamarck, *La Philosophie Zoölogique,* which was the first truly scientific presentation of evolution. This work, however, did not receive the recog-

nition of the learned world; a full fifty years elapsed before the conquest could be carried to victory by Darwin in his *Origin of Species.*[1] His work was later supplemented by that of numerous scientists, notably Wallace, Haeckel, Weismann, and Huxley. Since the eighties there has been an opposition to the Darwinian theory, but in its present form it may certainly be said that the vast majority of biologists agree with it and almost without exception acknowledge the principle of evolution.

Darwinism and Evolution Not Synonymous

In discussing Darwinism and the theory of evolution, it is important to point out clearly at the start that the two are not the same. Indeed many scientists to-day reject Darwinism while accepting the theory of evolution. Among these are the followers of Lamarck, and some who accept neither Darwinism nor Lamarckism. Here we may leave our short historical account to present the theory of evolution, Darwinism, and Lamarckism. We must point out that Darwinism does not have much connection with Darwin, nor Lamarckism with Lamarck. The followers of Darwin in particular have far outstripped their master in their dogmatism.

Arguments for Evolution

The principal points and arguments for the theory of evolution stated in the briefest form are as follows:

[1] Darwin was aided by the development of geology as a science. Lyell, in his *Principles of Geology,* advanced the idea of earth evolution to explain the paleontologic forms.

1. The study of fossils (paleontology) has, along with geology, demonstrated that among the extinct animal species there were primitive forms which may be looked upon as older, intermediate, or transitional forms of present-day species. The so-called older forms are in the older geological layers. There have actually been found transitions between animal classes which have hitherto appeared totally unconnected. For example, in the clay at Solnhofen, Bavaria, was found the so-called archaeopterix, which is part reptile and part bird. Even more instructive is the discovery of what may be looked upon as the forebears of our modern horse. While the modern horse has a one-toed foot (representing the original middle toe), paleontological discoveries have disclosed all of the transitional forms from five toes to one. Other examples of gradual development have also been found. More recently ancient human remains have come to light which are supposed to be links between man and the anthropoid apes.[2] These are, of course, of great interest to the layman.

2. Animal geography is especially important for the theory of evolution. Certain countries have fauna for which no climatic cause has been found. Australia, in particular, has a fauna quite different from that of any other country. The line of division, which is somewhat sharp, lies in the Malayan Archipelago between Asia and Australia. In this case, changes in the geography of the earth are said

[2] Recently, Westenhoeffer has come to the conclusion that man is more ancient than ape. As evidence he points out the morphology of the lower jaw and foot.

to be responsible, for it is believed that a common fauna indicates an original territorial continuity, even of what are to-day widely separated parts of the earth, while, conversely, greatly differing faunas of adjacent parts (the case of Australia and Asia) are indicative of an early separation. The fauna of Australia is very ancient. Here the primitive mammals, the marsupials (e.g. kangaroos), remained. In other parts of the earth they were superseded by the true mammals. Since the rest of the land was continuous, the mammals spread.

3. Comparative anatomy serves as a further support for the theory of evolution. The comparative study of organs of different animals, and especially of their individual development, shows a remarkable similarity of structure. In some cases organs, although differing widely in function and appearance, can be traced to a single type. As an example may be cited the wings of birds and the forelimbs of mammals or the swim-bladder of a fish and the mammalian lung (homologous organs). The principles of comparative anatomy also suggest explanations for rudimentary organs (appendix of man) for which there are apparently no teleological reasons.

4. Von Haeckel and F. Mueller place especial emphasis on the parallelism between different animal species in their embryonic condition. They have developed the so-called biogenetic law; the ontogenetic development of a mammal (development of the individual) goes from the stage of a fertilized ovum through a great many stages which repre-

sent the steps in ascent from primitive animal forms. In this way they interpret the gill slits in the mammalian embryo.

These are the so-called proofs—or better, arguments—for the theory of evolution. Thus far we have said nothing of the "how" of evolution, having concerned ourselves entirely with data on the history of the animal kingdom. These data are based on definite discoveries in living and fossil material. In a broad sense what we have just given is the theory of evolution. All else is left open. A criticism will be made later.

Lamarckism

The theories which are associated with the names of Lamarck and Darwin, in distinction to the general theory of evolution, endeavor to give an *explanation* of the working of evolution. Lamarck, who proposed his theory more than one hundred years ago, did not have a very large body of facts at his disposal. His theory was not inductive, it resulted rather from a happy inspiration. Lamarck himself looked upon the animal kingdom as a single line rising from the lowest animals to man. He regarded use and disuse as the cause of change and improvement of the organism. Thus, the giraffe evolved a long neck because at one time it was compelled to obtain its food from high trees. The mole has poor eyesight because, living continually in the ground, it has no need of a better. In distinction to St. Hilaire, he placed little significance on the direct action of environment, that is, he ascribed the development more to something inherent in the

organism than to the determinative influence of outside factors.

Darwinism

Darwin had a different idea regarding progressive development in the animal kingdom. He regarded the slight differences between different individuals as the basis of change. The variations become comparatively constant in the case of the development of a new species. Darwin considered this fluctuating variability as undirectioned and pure chance. The experience of artificial breeding for the improvement of domestic animals suggested to him that nature in a like manner causes a selection of the fit (natural selection). This natural breeding seemed to him both conceivable and necessary, because, as Malthus pointed out, the great overproduction of individuals, and more particularly of seed, leads to a destruction of the essentials of life which can be replaced only to a limited extent. In the struggle for existence which follows, only the stronger and more viable survive. Those individuals are more capable of surviving who happen to have slight variations, histological or functional, which serve to overcome, more or less, some of the difficulties encountered by the individual. A small advantage thus gained in the struggle for existence is retained and developed in the course of time. Thus, from a pigment spot there was gradually produced the present optical organ of mollusks and vertebrates.

Neo-Lamarckism

Neo-Lamarckism differs considerably from La-

marckism. Whereas Lamarck regarded use and disuse as the factors of evolution, thus assuming a great unknown law, his followers have made the so-called principle of necessity the basis of the theory. In other words, the need of an organ is the cause of its origin. This idea, which has a psychological element in it, presupposes adaptation and demands as a hypothetical principle the active accumulation of chance variations. It is well known that Lamarckism is based on the heritability of acquired characteristics.

The theory of the transmission of acquired characteristics has recently found many opponents and has led to the further development of the Darwinian theory in order to dispense with such an assumption. Weismann was particularly responsible for the change in the Darwinian theory. He made the principle of natural selection the cardinal point of the theory.

II

We shall begin our criticism of the theory of evolution by pointing out the deficiencies in the Darwinian theory and in Darwinism, proceeding then to a discussion of the views of Lamarck and of Lamarckism, and finally examining the theory of evolution in general.

Criticism of Darwinism

Our criticism of Darwin will deal first of all with the principle of fluctuating variations. Variations of the kind that Darwin had in mind could not be operative as the basis of evolution. Darwin was familiar with what are called plus and minus varia-

tions, by which are meant deviations from the average, some lying below and some above this level. He did not, however, have at his disposal any large collections of figures. Such were available later through the painstaking efforts of Johannsen and others. They showed that the frequency of the deviation from the mean follows the law of Gauss, which means simply that there is no tendency for the variations to proceed in a given direction (Quetelet and Galton). It may further be seen that, according to the Darwinian point of view, the variability must be purely a matter of chance. Darwinism is quite silent about the fact that the newly acquired mean must remain hereditarily constant in the new species. An hereditary fixing of the mean is not found, however, when pure lines are dealt with (Johannsen). Darwin was also ignorant of the laws of heredity discovered by Mendel, which were first placed before the scientific world by Correns and others in 1900. These laws show that a mixed type may arise from hybridization (crossing), but in the progeny there are always pure forms of the parents, according to a definite mathematical rule.

Many leading scientists have definitely taken a stand against Darwinism. Here we may summarize their objections.

The first point of attack is the idea of the struggle for existence, the struggle of all against all—which Darwin and Malthus taught. Kropotkin and others have directed attention to the opposite concept of *help* in the animal kingdom and by demonstrating a harmony in the realm of organisms have

materially weakened the principle of enmity. The idea of the limitation of space is also being attacked. It has rightly been pointed out that the supply of necessities for those animals coming into an uninhabited land may not be at all adequate. The chief attack of the critic is directed, however, against the principle of natural selection. In the first place, he points out that it is purely hypothetical and is in no way substantiated by fact. It is built up too much on the analogy of the procedure of the human breeder.

Besides being unproved, there are also contradictory assumptions in the Darwinian theory. It becomes completely incomprehensible—absurd even—when one tries to explain by means of it the origin of any given part of the body. For example, if we wish to explain the origin of an eye such as we find in the cuttle fish or in mammals, according to Darwinism we must assume that same spot of pigment on the skin of the cuttle fish represented a tiny bit of progress toward its present optical organ. This initial stage would hardly be of any advantage and would mean nothing in favor of the animal in the struggle for existence. The assumption that there is a parallel development of the accessory cellular apparatus in the gradual evolution of the eye is quite unimaginable. Besides, the eye consists not only of a light-perceiving organ in the retina, but of a refractive medium as well. The retina itself developed from a fore part of the brain and is connected in a definite way with the brain by a system of nerves. This immensely complicated apparatus cannot possibly have arisen, as Darwin

would have it, by natural selection. According to the Darwinian theory, there would have to accompany each evolutionary step of an organ a parallel evolution of the parts functionally connected with it, perhaps too of the whole body, in order that such a step could serve the animal in the struggle for existence. This is inconceivable unless natural selection be considered as an agent of divine wisdom and power. To the naturalist the theory is also unacceptable, since it is impossible to see how any preliminary stage can function as an optical organ. No one can show how an eye could function if any definite part were considered removed. Bergson has brought this objection to the fore in very emphatic style.

Driesch has reduced the theory *ad absurdum* in another way, namely, by showing that the origin of organic regeneration cannot be explained by the dogmatic Darwinians. For example, if the power of regeneration of lost parts were to have arisen by fluctuating variations and natural selection in the struggle for existence, then all of our present-day salamanders must be descended from ancestors which had a limb bitten off. All present-day specimens of Triton Taeniatus can regenerate all four extremities, so that according to the Darwinians they must therefore be descended from forbears which accidentally lost all four limbs. Therefore only those animals were victorious in the struggle for existence which lost their four legs, while those which suffered no loss of limb were unsuccessful in this struggle! This absurdity spells a death sentence for rigorous Darwinism.

We have seen in the preceding section that natural selection does not solve the mystery of evolution. At best it is a factor which operates negatively by weeding out undesirable characteristics and leaving the more useful ones. It has certain possibilities, but it cannot explain the positive progress of evolution. The explanation of the origin of complex organs such as the eye on the basis of fluctuating variations, as we have said, tacitly assumes the operation of a teleological factor, without which the Darwinian intermediate forms could not exist. With such an assumption, however, the basic idea of Darwinism is overthrown. Indeed every attempt to save the Darwinian theory has always led to fresh arguments against it. Finally, as we have pointed out, the death blow to natural selection has been given in its attempt to explain regeneration.

Criticism of Lamarckism

Our criticism of Lamarckism is not concerned primarily with the views of Lamarck, which were rather vague and unempirical, but rather with the principles which modern exponents and elaborators of Lamarckism have taken as the basis of their theories. Adaptation, which is the starting point of Lamarckism, is not one of the principles; it is an expression of biological facts. The question is merely whether the adaptive tendencies of the organism are as extensive as the Lamarckians would have them. The difficult part for the Lamarckian view is the transmission of acquired characteristics. The Lamarckians may use as support certain work

which, from an experimental standpoint, partially confirms their views. We know from the work of Kammerer that certain so-called "instinct variations" are inherited. He showed in his celebrated researches that the fire salamander, which normally deposits fourteen or more gill-bearing larvae in water, will, in the absence of water, retain them until they are fully developed, and then give birth to them on land. Conversely, he showed that the black salamander, which normally bears two fully developed young on land, can be forced to assume the procedure of the fire salamander. The important point is not the adaptation to environment, but that this adaptation is inherited, even when the animals are returned to their natural environment. It must be stated very clearly, however, that the transmission of such acquired characteristics is exceptional.

The nature of Lamarckism may be better understood by considering the accumulation and transmission of chance variations. Lamarckism differs completely from Darwinism in having an activistic point of view. It does not become materialistic as does the latter. Both theories have in common, however, the chance element. This very criterion of chance, according to the most recent of the great critics, demonstrates the defectiveness of both theories. Driesch brought out the same objections against Lamarckism as Wigand against Darwinism when he said, "Aus einem zufaelligen Steinhaufen koenne nun und nimmer das Parthenon entstehen." Lamarckism in its dogmatism pictures the retention and transmission of chance variations as occurring

as the result of a psychological judgment. This psychic element, however, makes the theory of the chance variations unacceptable, for each "decision" is not necessarily related to the history of the organism and species as a whole. This is true since a need of a given characteristic, which is the essential thing for its retention, is satisfied only when the desire for accessory needs is fulfilled. Thus the principles of Lamarckism, as we found with Darwinism, are unable to explain the origin of such an apparatus as the mammalian eye. A satisfactory explanation of this point is necessarily required of any theory which claims to explain the working of evolution. The origin of life itself is accounted for neither by Darwinism nor by Lamarckism. Darwinism indeed does not attempt such an explanation; while Neo-Lamarckism, being vitalistic, requires none. The development of young phylogenetic structures into the more complex organs therefore fails to offer a satisfactory explanation. Neither of the two theories is successful in explaining the protective function of sympathetic coloring or mimicry. The explanations attempted are open to the same objection as those to which we called attention in the case of the eye. Psychical agencies can have little significance.

The Mutation Theory

Since the fact of fluctuating variations then has ceased to be considered as the basis of evolution, other possibilities have been sought. De Vries believes his so-called mutations are responsible for the origin of new species. The original observation

of De Vries [3] was that there occasionally occurs in plants a production of daughter plants which are completely different from the parent.

Accordingly, new species would not arise slowly by almost imperceptible degrees, but quite suddenly and explosively.

There is a so-called pre-mutation condition which must be considered as latent. In most cases, as Driesch has pointed out, a mutation does not represent an acquiring of additional characteristics but is a *Verlustmutation* (loss mutation).

The cause of mutations, according to Tornier, is to be found in certain inner physiological changes. He cites, for example, the case of the goldfish. These are produced from a species of small Chinese carp by keeping them in dark vessels, under unhealthy conditions, and with a decided lack of oxygen. Most of the animals die, and among the survivors are many monstrosities. Tornier believes that the mutation comes from a weakening of the developmental energy of the germ, due to the deficiency of oxygen in an early and critical period in the animal's history. The weakening lessens the power of the organism to regulate its form. This enfeeblement is then transmitted and produces a similar morphological effect in each succeeding generation. In accord with Driesch, then, Tornier pictures mutations as inheritable processes which result mostly in lessened variety and quality. For this reason, the mutations of De Vries cannot be responsible for the evolution of animal species, not only because they seldom

[3] It has recently been shown that the plant upon which De Vries based his theory was not a mutation but a complex hybrid.

result in progressive changes, but also because of their extraordinary rarity as natural occurrences. Since, then, examples such as the production of the goldfish are extremely rare, they can therefore be as little looked upon as explanations for the process of phylogeny as the results of artificial breeding of domestic animals for the support of Darwinism.

More recently the mutation theory has been considerably developed by T. W. Morgan, Baur, and others. Their work has been very important in the understanding of the fundamental differences which an individual possesses in respect to the "norm." It has also served as a basis of a theory of evolution. Mutations are defined as changes which arise from unknown causes in the germ cells and give rise to individuals which differ from their ancestors in one or more Mendelian characters. The changes appear suddenly. Some scientists distinguish between Mixo and Idiovariations, but the boundary line between the two is not very distinct. The latter are the mutations in a restricted sense of the word. The experimental work has been done in zoölogy by Morgan on the fruit fly *Drosophila,* and in botany by Baur on *Antirrhinum* (snapdragon).

Mutations usually arise from inbreeding and sometimes from an overabundance of nourishment. Very often mutants are pathological forms which have little vitality.

At all events we must consider that these true mutations can serve as a basis for the origin of species. Whether they can really explain the origin

of the whole animal kingdom, as some claim, is a matter that by no means has been demonstrated. The fact that experimental results have produced such pathological specimens makes one at least cautious in drawing conclusions.

III

Position of the Theory

It is important to note that neither of the two chief theories which attempt to explain evolution has been able to withstand a thorough criticism. There are a great many critics, among whom may be mentioned Driesch and Durken (to name two who differ from each other considerably), who object about equally to both theories. We have already shown that one particularly consequential form of Neo-Darwinism (natural selection) has likewise been unable to withstand criticism. Weismann's imposing theoretical structure, which hails natural selection as all-powerful, has little significance because of its lack of balance, not to mention the objections to his theory of determinants shown by work in experimental zoölogy. (Driesch, Morgan, et al.) Weismann and his followers refuse to admit the inheritance of acquired characteristics, explaining the transmission of variations by means of a complicated theory of parallel changes in germ and soma.

Although the theory of descent is by no means established, there are many critics who have great faith in it, in spite of all that has been said against it. The theory, however, has in reality lost most of the prestige that it formerly enjoyed. It has

become quite unassuming, and must be admitted to be at best a possibility. This conclusion is of great importance in view of the rôle which the principle of evolution has played as a view of life. The scientists who have maintained an idea of a continuous phylogeny are concentrating their interests on a great law of transformation. Only those, however, who believe as Bergson in the doctrine of absolute freedom can picture evolution as completely free and irrational, evolving itself as creative development in the *élan vital.* This assumption is not identical with the doctrine of chance of the Darwinians and the Lamarckians, for to Bergson the governing factor in phylogenetic development is not an outside grouping of circumstances, but rather a somewhat mysterious principle epitomized in the statement "Dieu se fait dans la phylogénie." It must be understood, however, that this law is still very obscure.

Indeed, Driesch admits that the value of pure phylogeny is slight; even the more or less definitely established phylogenetic tables merely signify an ancestral gallery. According to Dubois Reymond, fantastic tables, such as Haeckel has collected, have the same degree of reasonability as has a chronology of Homeric heroes. The phylogenetic theory is significant in one respect, however, in that it presents a very important problem in the philosophy of the organism.

Original Forms of Life

We must next consider the problem of the number of original forms of life. It there were several

original types, a given species may then have existed from the beginning or may have evolved from another species. Why do we still have to-day both highly organized and simple forms of life? Why do we still have amœbae, for example? If we accept a polyphyletic evolution, the zoölogical system becomes merely a desire for order on the part of the scientist. It may be that the great divisions of the animal kingdom show a certain regularity by which the evolving animal develops. On the assumption of many forms originating independently, it would be possible to have two animals placed together in the systematic arrangement but derived from such different sources that they would show no blood relationship.

We must also deal here with the problem of the extinction of certain animal species. This extinction is perhaps not a dying off but the result of an ever-moving transition toward a new form (Steinmann, Driesch). The matter is as yet unsolved and is perhaps forever insoluble, since, in contrast to the evolution of an individual, there are only solitary instances of the evolution of a race, and these cannot be duplicated at will. Even were phylogeny considered by itself, it would not present the unified whole that we have in ontogeny. The question is still an open one from the standpoint of phylogeny and certainly cannot be answered by natural science. In this particular case it is important only to remember that, as Driesch puts it, the result of organic evolution is the *forma essentialis;* and not the *forma accidentalis* as the "chance" theorists would have it. The transformation principle is bound up perhaps

with the entelechy or vital factor of Driesch. It certainly assumes vitalistic operations.

Fleischmann's Views

Among the zoölogists of to-day, Fleischmann in Erlangen is the only one who, uninfluenced by church dogmatism, completely rejects the theory of evolution. To him the paleontologic and systematic discoveries have no significance. The zoölogical system is merely an expression of the desire for order in research and gives no account at all of the evolution of species. The ideas of evolution themselves he reserves for the evolution of the individual. Fleischmann, however, stands alone in this respect and has no following even among Catholic scientists.

IV

Origin of Man

From the very beginning many scientists and the public at large have been greatly interested in the question of the origin of man. The problem, therefore, requires particular treatment here. To many people the idea of man's losing his special place in nature seemed quite acceptable, while to others, of course, it was very distasteful, and caused them to entertain a bitter enmity toward the theory. For the scientist, however, the question as to whether man had animal ancestors is one which must be solved without relation to his emotional feelings, in a matter of fact way. Historically, it is noteworthy that the great theorists of evolution have shown considerable reluctance in answering this question. Darwin was very cautious in speaking of

the subject and left the possibility open of man having a special creation. Wallace went further, suggesting that man did not belong in the classification with the lower animals. These, however, were nothing more than conjectures. The problem was actually attacked in a scientific fashion only with the discovery and accumulation of paleontological data. All of the many celebrated remains which have been found, however (for example, the Neanderthal skull, the lower jaw at Heidelberg, the le Moustier and la Chapelle aux Saints skeletons in the Dordogne), were Hominidae, representing primitive humans, and were not the eagerly sought-for animal ancestors of the human race that Haeckel predicted.

There is really only one discovery which anthropologists consider as the missing link. This was discovered by the Dutch physician, Dubois, in 1891 in Trinil, Java, and called by him the Pithecanthropus Erectus, or the "erect ape-man." It consisted of a cranium, three teeth and a piece of a lower jaw, all found within a radius of 40 meters and a piece of the upper part of a thigh bone 15 meters further away. That all these parts belong to one individual is doubtful. The classification of Pithecanthropus has been somewhat difficult. Dubois himself has decided definitely in favor of the human classification of Pithecanthropus, chiefly in view of the exact figures which Dubois has determined in the course of many years. He found that the top of the skull had a capacity of 570 cubic centimeters which represents a total skull capacity of about 900 cubic centimeters. This value is only a calculated one (based on the constant ratio of 1:156) since

only the top of the skull was found. The figure shows, however, that there is no doubt that the skull belonged to a member of the Hominidae, since the largest gorilla, in spite of his other measurements, has a skull capacity of hardly 500 c. c. Modern man has a skull capacity of 1,200 to 1,600 c. c. but there are also capacities found among the pigmies, particularly in small female skulls, which run as low as 900 c. c. Dubois draws the conclusion that Pithecanthropus should be considered as a distinct genus of the family of the Hominidae, and he further states that nothing definite can be said as to whether the Pithecanthropus stands among or is related to the ancestors of the human race. In every respect it resembles the human race more closely than it does the ape. We therefore see that modern paleontological rsearch has discovered nothing which can definitely be called a connecting link between man and the rest of the animal kingdom. At present it is considered almost futile to attempt to construct an ancestral tree for man. The precipitin reaction of Nuttal, which was considered very important for a long time, cannot now be considered as convincing proof. The test was supposed to show a close resemblance between the blood of man and ape. There would naturally be sera reactions common to types closely associated in the classification which would not exist between those widely separated. Modern evolutionary opinion, it appears, does not attach the importance to these serologic discoveries that it once did.

Besides, even with the support of phylogeny, the origin of man is not so easily pictured as it was

earlier supposed. At present in scientific circles the most that is definitely understood is that the present-day ape, even the anthropoid, is not the ancestor of man. The present idea is that both man and ape, which certainly belong next to each other in a biological classification, may have had common ancestors. We saw, however, that Dubois himself considered the possibility that his Pithecanthropus Erectus (and the same perhaps can be demonstrated for other diluvial finds), was not the ancestor of homo sapiens.[4]

Criticism of Evolution

The theories of descent are open to the criticism that they are based almost exclusively on morphology and data from paleontological discoveries. This is indeed a most productive field. Biologic-historical research is important and I do not wish to deprecate its value, but it is questionable whether it alone can solve the problem. The serological method of Nuttal [5] was in this respect a distinct advance. Quite as important were the researches of Albrecht Koessel on the composition of sperm heads, particularly of fish. He showed that there are cases of species

[4] The reader will recall the theory advanced by Westenhoeffer, referred to above.

[5] The test may be illustrated by a concrete example. Human blood is injected into a rabbit. After a week or more the rabbit blood is found to have acquired the property of forming a precipitate or cloudiness when brought into contact with human blood serum or with the serum of the ape or monkey. No precipitate is formed if the rabbit serum is treated with any other kind of blood. Similar relationships exist throughout the animal kingdom, but recently several anomalies have been uncovered. Thus, for example, extract of guinea-pig tissue acts as if it were sheep serum. No one says, however, that the immediate ancestors of the sheep and guinea pig were related.

of fish which are very close together according to the systematic classification, but the sperm heads of which have widely differing chemical composition. These results are not refutations of the basic principles of the theory of descent but they make the significance of comparative anatomy somewhat doubtful.

It is important to mention in a criticism of evolution that it deals with something psycho-physical in nature. We can say nothing, however, with any degree of certainty, of the psychical life of an animal, since speech, the most important preliminary condition, is wanting.

Psychology plays an important part in the question of the evolution of man. Man is the one being possessing the power of speech and the ability to write. He not alone *knows* his emotions but can *express* them even indirectly if necessary by actions. If the theory of descent wishes to explain the origin of man it must also account for the origin of his psychical life. There have been many attempts to ascribe the origin of speech to the involuntary sounds of animals. There have also been several other hypotheses.

We freely admit that it is impossible to deny that the more highly organized animals may have more or less of a psychic life, but we unfortunately lack the means of attacking the problem. Where the key to understanding a subject is lacking, science cannot bridge the gap by vague conjecture. Science —painful though it may seem—must deal with facts and must avoid forced conclusions. It is not alone by periods of low standards.

animals. As Wundt once said, "Die Tiere sprechen nicht, nicht deshalb weil sie keine Sprache haben, sondern weil sie nichts zu sagen haben."

Ethics

Whereas psychology assumes only a quantitative difference in the psychic life of man and animal—a difference which has not been demonstrated, since there may easily be an unbridgeable qualitative difference—we are confronted by something entirely novel in ethics, sociology, and the complex which we call Civilization. There is no possibility of showing a development of human ethics and society from lower stages, nor is there any possibility of finding predecessors of the creative accomplishments which culminate in art and religion. The attempts of the Darwinians and many other naturalists to found ethics on the utilitarian principles of advantage and disadvantage, to consider joy and pain as the forerunners of our morality and sense of morals, must all be looked upon as complete failures. Our ethics is just the opposite of utilitarianism, hedonism, and eudaimonism, as many ethicists have pointed out (e. g. Heymans). The fact that we have to-day people who are impelled by motives which are egotistical or worse indicates nothing as to the origin of ethics. Ethics represents just the opposite of these inferior views. It is quite improbable that a system of ethics, which stands in such sharp contrast with all utilitarian considerations included in Kant's categorical imperative, but which succeeds in its purest expression, could be derived genetically from earlier stages running counter to it.

Ethical evolution, it has been argued, ran somewhat parallel to man's rise in the scale of civilization. Gruetzmacher is probably not wrong when he says that the ethical Saldo has hardly improved in the course of history. On the contrary, an increase of morality on the part of one portion of humanity is often accompanied by a decrease in that of another portion. The history of ethics and moral conduct has not presented a curve of continuous slope. Periods of high standards of morality are followed by periods of low standards.

Special Creation

We wish to deal very briefly with the question of the creative accomplishments of mankind. He who sees in religion only a power of high-striving humanity, can perhaps with little effort place man in the realm of animals. On the other hand, there are those not connected with the church who, believing that the spiritual thoughts of man involve something more than imagination, and that by them man approaches more closely to the true law and to the creator of the world, must find it hard to conceive of mankind as the end of a long series of animals. All of our considerations make it at least doubtful whether man has not a special place in the animal kingdom. Indeed, they make it very probable that unification must stop there.

Man as the Goal

One question which science is unable to answer, if it is assumed that the process of evolution is still going on, concerns the goal of phylogeny. Such a

question is of great interest for philosophy and religion even if it can be discussed only in a conjectural way. Is man the goal? There is no answer to be given, of course, but it is important in that every religion places man in the center of the universe in order better to impress upon him his moral and spiritual obligations. This view of religion is, in my opinion, always a justifiable one, and is not at all overthrown or rendered superfluous by the theory of evolution—at least it ought not to be. The right of existence of a biological theory in the science of biology can be decided by biology alone, since in that particular science alone can the value of the theory for future research be determined. On the other hand, whether a biological theory can be raised to a *Weltanschauung* and exert the influence even in other sciences such as ethics, is a matter for a higher court to decide.

Position of Jewish Tradition

Having treated our subject from the standpoint of biology, we now turn to the real purpose of our paper, namely, to discuss the position that Jewish tradition may take toward the theory of descent. It is my conviction that this question cannot be answered simply, since most of the literature on the subject has no real weight. The pros and cons have to be arrived at in an indirect fashion. They do not even have the weight of circumstantial evidence. The theory of evolution is just one case of the general question of how to treat the results of modern science and the theories which summarize the results. There have always been two opposing

points of view. The one attempts to take the prevailing facts and theories and to write them into the religious point of view. The other maintains a fundamental distrust—one might even say a contempt—for the results of human thought and experiment. The latter point of view seems justified when we take into consideration profound changes which are always taking place in such sciences as physics and biology. In many cases time brings about not only an overthrow of prevailing theories, but sometimes in a very short period opposite conclusions are drawn from the same data. Anyone who holds this against science completely misunderstands its purpose. It is inevitable that, with the broadening of scientific endeavor and the opening of entirely new scientific fields, facts already established should be viewed in different lights. The theories based on these facts necessarily change also.

It is quite evident that, no matter how carefully a piece of research be carried out, it can exert its influence for only a relatively short time. Sooner or later it must give way to newer points of view. Nevertheless, such effort is not in vain, inasmuch as all later work is based upon it. Not seldom problems are brought to life again which have lain dormant for hundreds of years. I refrain from stating which of the above attitudes toward science should receive the preference. Both may be fruitful, even the latter one, since it makes up for any discouragement it may give to science by inspiring a loftier religious spirit. Wherever a tendency is present,

however, which seeks to deny scientific results or choose what results it wishes, there I protest.

Genesis

I candidly admit that it is possible that the statements laid down in Genesis are not of such a description as to enable one to make a decision for or against the theory of evolution. There is only one point that is clear, namely, that the Biblical account clearly indicates more than a single original form of life. It is exactly on this point that science has nothing contrary to say. It is true that Lamarck and many others believed that the whole animal kingdom came from one primary species. Objections have been raised to such an idea by many modern evolutionists, and to-day almost all concede the possibility of a polyphylogeny. All else, such as whether from such primitive types evolution proceeded, seems to me to be an open question.

Several Jewish authors have concerned themselves with the question as to whether evolution is opposed to the spirit of Jewish teaching. The results of their studies have not been too certain. I do not think it necessary to name them here, I wish only to point out the work of Wohlgemuth,[6] on the lectures of P. Wassmann, and also that of Aaron Marcus who treated our subject in a lecture and a series of remarks in *Barsilai.* I published some essays on this subject years ago in *Jeschurun.*[7]

The trend of Wohlgemuth's and my own early

[6] *Die Vortraege von P. Wassmann,* 1907.
[7] *Jeschurun,* I, 351; IV, 612; V, 181; VIII, 480.

work was practically to deny evolution, even though both of us admitted the possibility of evolution in a narrow sense. To-day I might not come to such a sweeping conclusion, although I certainly do not consider the value of the theory as established. Opposed to my earlier dogmatism in the matter of denial, I now guard against my falling into a dogmatism in the other direction. I believe that the interests of our tradition are best served by representing the standpoint of the best critical minds of modern biology. Modern biology does not dare to arrive at any final conclusion, since, of course, a last word can never be said in such a matter. This is a mildly skeptical opinion that I have presented, and even in the eyes of very cautious people it can hardly appear to endanger the traditional point of view. In this qualified acceptance of the theory of evolution, it must be pointed out very clearly that I have completely rejected that view which contradicts the assumption of a creatorial Theism [8] and the unmistakable basic concepts of our Bible.

It would be an easy matter to define the attitude of religion toward science if one requirement were fulfilled, namely, that we know the *exact* meaning of each word and sentence in the Bible. There is no doubt that even the greatest commentators disagree, and it must be remembered that they had religious thought and not exact science in mind. In addition our scientific terms have undergone considerable change of meaning. Everyone is acquainted

[8] I. e. the viewpoint of God as creator of the universe who after the creation leads an existence "next" to the world. The expression comes from Driesch, *Wirklichkeitslehre.*

with the changes in meaning undergone by such words as "soul," "life," and the word which we have used in this paper, "species." We strike a real difficulty if we try to discovery what the Bible means by the word [9] למינו.

In the long preliminary part of this paper, I purposely used only scientific criticism in dealing with Darwinism and Lamarckism. The rejection of the "chance" factor on purely scientific grounds happily meets with the basic views of Judaism and especially

[9] A "fact" in science is usually regarded as something permanent and totally unaffected by theory or prejudice. It can easily be shown, however, that a fact, so far as the scientist deals with it, may at one time be a fact and at another time a fallacy. Let us take the case of cod-liver oil as a remedy for rickets. For centuries the Scandinavians used this remedy and found it highly successful. The oldtime physician made similar observations. The fact then appeared to be that cod-liver oil possessed the specific property of curing rickets. About fifteen years ago chemical analysis showed that the oil contained nothing not found in other oils. In the light of this discovery cod-liver oil seemed to lose its peculiar effectiveness. Thus we find in a leading textbook on pharmacology written in 1915 (Cushney, p. 682) the following statement: "On the whole, cod-liver oil has not been shown to have any action apart from that of an easily digested food, and its superiority to some other fats and oils has not been satisfactorily established." This represented a summary of the best scientific thought of the year 1915. In the next few years vitamins were discovered, and it soon appeared that mere chemical analysis did not tell the whole story as to the value of any given food or drug. And so we find the same author writing in a later edition (1924, p. 508): "Previously various theories of its (cod-liver oil) action were suggested and many substitutes were devised and made from vegetable oils, but the vegetable oils were almost devoid of vitamin A, and these substitutes were valueless." Thus we see that what was taken as a fact for centuries was no longer a fact in 1915, only to become a fact again in 1924. What will be the fact in 1930? Other cases could be cited, how, for example, serum treatment of scarlet fever was effective in 1902 and at the present day, but without effect in the time intervening. Since facts themselves are so subject to the faults of interpretations, the theories which employ them as foundations must of necessity be of uncertain reliability.—TRANSLATOR.

with the belief in God. Only that theory of evolution denies God which, although not necessarily denying a teleology in the sense of mechanical causation, would limit His field of action. It is possible to conceive of a theory of evolution which has not the "chance" factor but which assumes some great guiding principle. Such a theory could lead to a more spiritual belief in God, for although God may not explicitly carry out each part, He has laid down the original law governing each step. I do not ascribe any value to such an idea, however, and will not elaborate on it. A sublime teaching of God does not necessarily presume a theory of descent of the kind just suggested. The two, however, may be reconciled.

The factor of "chance" is not the only objectionable part of the theory. Even Bergson's theories of phylogeny have little in common with the Jewish idea. In a certain respect there appears to be a paradox, for one might expect from Bergson, who holds the doctrine of freedom of action so important, an advancement of our view. But his doctrine of freedom is of a very particular kind. Contrary to the views of theologians, Bergson states "Dieu se fait." This belief of Bergson prevents us from accepting his theory, although it is quite different from Darwinism or Lamarckism.

With even more emphasis than Oscar Hertwig must Jewish teaching stand against the consequences of Darwinism in ethics, social law, and civilization in its broadest sense. While with the refutation of the idea of chance the danger of Darwinism is considerably lessened, yet the idea of a natural-

istic basis for civilization and culture is not thereby disposed of. I will therefore deal, however briefly, with this subject. The fact that Darwin dealt in metaphors derived from human society, and which were re-applied to problems of ethics, has, as Hertwig pointed out, led to a leveling of pure biology and ethics. Metaphors have the same significance in biology that they have in fiction. Without going too deeply into these important matters it is clear that society is made possible only by the fact that the struggle of all against all which Darwin held for pure biology does not operate among human beings. It cannot be refuted that we nurse the sick, care for our disabled children, and help those who are weak in the "struggle for existence." Ethics is a peculiar subject, the field of which it is to conquer the natural laws in these respects. Huxley knew this. From a higher point of view it is a task which man must fulfill, not as a pure biological creation, but rather because it is an individual task of humanity. When we consider the conclusions which the Darwinists have drawn concerning ethical, social, and political development, we readily understand the great enmity borne by religious and ethical people toward Darwinism. We must guard ourselves against proceeding too far. It is no longer necessary in order to oppose the dangers of Darwinism to challenge the certain results of biology or to characterize as dangerous the general theory of evolution. The theory itself is free from the difficulties of the dogmatic viewpoint of Darwinism. If one has the vitalistic point of view in matters of biology, and if one regards psychology, ethics, and sociology as subjects

not derived from natural science, but as independent fields of knowledge, then there is no fear of the religious desolation which belief in rigid Darwinism can cause.

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Translator's Note

Dr. Wolfsberg's discussion of the Jewish attitude toward evolution may be briefly summarized as follows. He accepts the principle of evolution in a very general way, rejecting those portions of the present-day theory which run counter to Jewish thought (e. g. the origin of man). In support of

his position he shows that the evidence cited in favor of that which he rejects is neither complete nor convincing. In regard to the theories which attempt to picture the working of evolution he shows that there is much damaging evidence against them. In other words, he believes that nothing which has withstood searching criticism has been found to be at odds with Jewish belief. The Jewish ideas on the whole subject are not very dogmatic. The general idea of evolution, with certain exceptions, as was mentioned above, Dr. Wolfsberg accepts.

It may be well to examine a little more closely at this point into the idea of evolution, to see why one might hesitate before accepting it blindly or before proclaiming it as representing the absolute in truth.

A theory in science attempts to give an explanation of how certain results are produced. It must be in accord with all, or most all, the important and established facts. As more facts are discovered a theory changes, often very radically. The truth, on the other hand, we believe to be quite immutable. As long as a theory remains *within* a science, the type of "proof" required for its acceptance is somewhat different from that necessary for convincing us that it is the *true* mechanism of a process. The theory of evolution, as we all know, is now applied considerably beyond the sphere of biology. In many circles it has come to be the criterion for judging whether a given person is progressive or wilfully blinded and bigoted. If it really can be used as a basis for molding opinion outside of science, it ought among other things to be clearly and squarely supported by the facts.

The evidence for evolution seems to be of such magnitude and of such a variety that most people are willing to be fully convinced. If, however, we analyze the various types of proof offered we can see that the proof is not absolute; it is suggestive rather than final. Let us proceed to such an analysis to show what we mean.

The evolutionist sees before him the hosts of animals and plants and finds they can be classified more or less readily on the basis of complexity. He notices that one animal form seems to grade into the next. He erases the word "classification" and calls his list a "family tree." He does not say that each animal is the ancestor of the one which follows, but states that each animal is descended from an ancestor which more or less resembles its predecessor on his list. Such a step is ingenious, but could conceivably be a misstep. For example, let us apply the same principle to a line of men arranged according to height. The error would be obvious if we were to say that each smaller man resembles in height the parent of the man next to him in the line.

Let us consider another type of argument. The study of the embryo shows that it begins as a one-celled organism and grows through stages resembling the lower animals. An analogy [10] or two which are sometimes given will show that such evidence is not necessarily proof. It has been pointed out that in building a fire a man uses chips of wood, leaves, or paper, places these on wood or logs, and finally

[10] Analogies are unjustified when used in an attempt to establish facts, but are permissible in testing a method of reasoning.

adds coal. His method represents the states through which fuel has passed, but obviously this is not because he wishes to fulfill its evolutionary history. Or take another example. In building a house, first a hole is dug in the ground (suggesting the hovels of certain primitive African tribes), then stone is put in, then a wooden framework is set up, and finally concrete or brick is used to finish the work. These steps are taken because each is necessary at the time, and not because primitive man first dug holes in the ground, advanced to the use of stones, and in comparatively recent times to wood, brick, and concrete. Just so, the embryo, in development, may have an entirely different significance than a repetition of what is said to be its ancestry.

Another proof is that of geology. From the standpoint of science this is a most convincing proof, but there are two reasons which prevent it from being absolute. In the first place the evidence is not complete. There is the feeling among scientists that future work in geology can only fill in the outlines already developed by work in the past. There are, however, instances in science where more complete data have completely changed the original indications. Examples are common in recent physics and chemistry. In the second place, the geological record is not duplicable, or in other words subject to repetition by experiment. This means that if a given skeleton is found it may or may not represent a common natural form. There are always chances that it may represent some freak which happened to be preserved, and therefore represents neither an ancestor nor an ancestral type.

We may here turn to a brief consideration of the following question: Why has the average man such firm conviction that evolution is an established fact? One factor, of course, is the popular writing of a certain school of propagandists. They write in a charming fashion and fill their books with photographs of restorations which are so vivid and full of detail that the reader gathers the impression that he is viewing photographs of original specimens. The most important factor, however, is the college course in biology. The average beginning course covers an enormous amount of ground. The theory of evolution is given in three or four lectures. There is no time to weigh facts or to consider exceptions. Objections to the theory would only confuse the student. The science is translated much as if it were a foreign language, and as such it conveys impressions with but partial accuracy. As a result, those who complete the course carry away two impressions in regard to evolution. The first is that all discoveries in the past have fully substantiated the theory and that all future discoveries can only hope to fill in gaps in the evidence; the second impression is that the mechanism of evolution is natural selection. This criticism may not apply to every beginning course in biology, but I believe that it does apply to the great majority. The legislators in Tennessee have recognized the difficulty; whether their method of handling the matter was wise is beside the point.

There is also another factor which has an important influence on the student. In his sudden introduction to science, he is impressed with the fact that

nature exhibits a law-bound orderliness. Even the most complicated processes can be analyzed into simple "known" elements. For some strange reason the student has the idea that religion teaches just the reverse. A few examples of the regularity of nature often cause him to turn mechanist, and as a mechanist he thinks that he may dispense with religion. He does not stop to consider that religion does not gainsay orderliness; that, in fact, if chaos existed, the existence of the Creator would not be proved. If the sun rose here to-day and there to-morrow, if animals were made of iron, sulphur, and arsenic, and man alone of his present protoplasm, there would be in these facts no proof of the existence of a Creator.

We have often heard Jewish college graduates discoursing most earnestly on the subject of evolution, citing the "facts" learned at college. We have seen, too, how frequently the orthodox Jew is held up to ridicule by such students as being afraid to accept the results of science. To such an unbeliever the orthodox Jew may answer, with truth: Evolution is an excellent theory for the stimulation of scientific research, and a process by which certain limited changes have probably occurred, but it has not been proved to be the general mechanism for the origin of species. Therefore, those who attack my religious beliefs from the standpoint of "science" are not using the facts of science as such, but are reading into them generalizations and theories which overstep the boundaries of exact truth.

VIII

THE ADOLESCENT IN SEX AND EDUCATION

BY

M. ASCHER, PH.D.

VIII

THE ADOLESCENT IN SEX AND EDUCATION

Introduction

How are we to combat the sexual dangers which beset the growing generation? Enlightenment is certainly to be recommended where it can be given in a proper manner. But where the hearts of parents and children are linked by a natural and loving intimacy, and a religious spirit permeates the household, a bulwark has been created stronger than "enlightenment." And where the Torah also enlightens the mind, there is every probability that the vice of the streets will fail to exercise any pernicious influence on the youthful soul, and that the greatest temptations will not scathe it.

"I have created the evil inclination, and I have also created the Torah as the instrument for mastering it" (B. Kiddushin, 30).

We may say in this respect, as Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai said in another connection: "Woe unto me if I speak, and woe unto me if I keep silence!" It is a difficult thing to "enlighten." If we do not do it ourselves, there is danger that our children will, through evil books and companions, obtain false instruction at a time when even the true would be

premature. We are, after all, in the last resort, responsible for our children.

If, then, we attempt to present a minimum of explanation of the mysteries of sex, we must do so on the lines laid down for our guidance in the divine law, the law which is the inexhaustible source of all spiritual knowledge, and which teaches us, among other things, to understand the laws of propagation, and as God's creatures to coöperate in the work of creation.

For insuring a normal and healthy sexual life, there can be little doubt that timely marriage is a sovereign prescription. There is profound wisdom in the dictum of the Sages: "Eighteen years is the age for marriage." Grave evils have resulted to the Western world from disregarding this precept. While it must be admitted that natures are different, and that the time of maturity varies in different individuals according to climate, surroundings, and disposition, still it is true in the main, even of us in the West, that young men without impediment who do not marry at an early age may be in danger of developing some more or less serious mental abnormality.

The problem is a serious one, owing to the organization of modern society. The claims of school, college, and the task of earning a livelihood make it impossible for most young men to think of setting up house at the age of eighteen. On the other hand, we must consider the lamentable consequences to our young men and women of deferring marriage so long that they fail to preserve their chastity against the assault of sexual impulse. For the avoid-

ance of so grave and pressing a danger, one may reasonably favor drastic change in our social arrangements.

We live in a century of unexampled progress. But civilization's external brilliance must not hide from us its internal shortcomings. The fact that many men nowadays cannot marry until they are twenty-five to thirty-five, while others, through economic difficulties, cannot think of marriage at all, shows that something is fundamentally wrong.

When circumstances compel a man to dissipate his natural energy in passion, his conduct is equivalent to self-murder and is to be regarded as a derogation of the divinity in man. The highest attainments of life are rendered possible only by the rational control of the sensual impulses. "Qui proficit in literis et deficit in moribus plus deficit quam proficit."—"He who makes progress in learning but is retrograde in morals, loses more than he gains." Of those who, possessing health and means, yet remain unmarried, the Talmud says, "No man who remains unmarried deserves the name of man" (Babli Yeb, 63). "He who does not marry is without true joy, without blessing, without happiness, without protection, without peace" (B. Yeb, 62). "Be fruitful and rear children" is the first command given to our original parents.

Although the immediate object of marriage is to perpetuate the race, yet the precepts of the Torah raise the marriage partnership from the physical to the moral plane. God in his mercy has given us the requisite strength for mastering our passions. Every misuse of the powers given to man for pre-

serving his kind is forbidden. Unnatural chastity is most severely punished. Onan, too, atoned for his sin with death; the idea of crushing the life of the embryo is so remote from Judaism that it is not so much as mentioned in the Torah.

Temptation to sin is strong; sin "lies in wait at the door." The essential thing is that we should not fall victims to temptation.

Web and Rope

"The evil inclination," say the Rabbis, "is at first as slender as the threads of a spider's web. But if it is indulged it becomes as strong as the ropes of a wagon" (B. Succah, 52). And another of their apologues runs: "At first the evil inclination is like a casual visitor. Once admitted it becomes a guest, and in the end proves to be master of the house" (ibid.). By cultivating his will power, man will create for himself a bulwark strong enough to keep evil desire in check.

In every one of us nature has implanted the longing to found a home, to be able to devote ourselves to our offspring. No people of antiquity valued posterity more highly than the Jews. Sublimity fills the heart of the Jewish parent at the birth of a child. The fairest blessing we can picture is expressed in the words: "Thy children shall be like olive-branches round thy table" (Ps. cxxviii). Therefore a man of sense will not dissipate his vital forces, but will devote them to the service of a healthy posterity.

Let us mention two of the most general guards against sexual evil:

The study of the Torah is the best prophylactic against sensual impulses.

The Sages say: "The best remedy for the evil inclination is in the study of the Torah, which is like fire putting out fire" (Aboth di R. Nathan, 15). And again: "When Israelites study the Torah, their evil inclination is delivered into their hands" (Ab. Zara, 5). Where the Torah fills the spirit, there is no room for sensual imaginings.

Unfortunately most Jews to-day are not imbued with the same spirit of Torah and therefore cannot avail themselves of this intellectual protection. In the present-day struggle for existence, it is of course very difficult to marry early. It is incumbent on us to remodel our social conditions in such a way that we may be able once more to lay down the rule. "Even the desires of a man," say the Sages, "are due to the grace of God." It can never be the right thing to declare war on the sexual impulse, which is part of the order of nature and has been implanted in us by the wisdom of God. Without this instinct to impel him, man would never found a family. Even sensual enjoyment must be ennobled and consecrated. Only by making it our object to "permeate the earthly with the heavenly and the temporal with the eternal" can we give harmony and beauty to our lives. It is our duty to bring the erotic impulses under the control of the spirit, with a view not of annihilating nature, but of establishing the domination of the spirit over sensual desires. Certain Christian teaching represents as a praiseworthy deed the mutilation of the sex organ. "And there are certain people who have castrated them-

selves for the sake of Heaven. He who can rise to this, let him do so" (Matt. xix. 12). In contrast with this, the Torah requires us to be strong enough to bridle this impulse, and even to press it into the service of religion.

Just as the power of the thought without physical excitation can stimulate physical eroticism, *so can the power of one's thought control and guide the erotic impulse,* precisely that member of which the Sages said, "There is a small member in man which becomes hungrier the more it is fed and more satisfied the more it is starved" (Babli Sanhedrin, 107). This member has been divinely selected to be the bearer of the sign of the covenant, and it should therefore always remind us that we are united with God and have sacred obligations toward Him.

It is true that the Biblical precept, "Ye shall be holy" (Lev. xix) is paraphrased by the Sages by the words, "Ye shall exercise self-restraint."

But abstemiousness is not the same as asceticism. The Nazirite had to bring a sacrifice, a sin-offering, because, as the Rabbis say, he had sinned against himself. As R. Eleazar explains it, he sinned in that he denied himself wine. Abstinence, it is true, is declared by the Sages to be a step toward holiness, but it must not be taken to imply complete withdrawal from the world.

The Talmud relates how R. Simeon ben Yochai and his son had to hide twelve years in a cave. When they at length emerged from the cave and again set foot in the outer world, they came across husbandmen employed in plowing and sowing.

"How foolish are these people," they exclaimed, "who neglect the pursuit of eternal life, and busy themselves with worldly requirements." Whereupon a voice called from heaven: "Have you come out of your cave to upset the order of the world?" By living in isolation, it is true, a man can more easily and more surely perfect his own spiritual development, but he reaches the highest stage of holiness only when he makes known his worth by service to the community.

Defective supervision during childhood is responsible for much of the harm that ensues in later years. Thousands of lives have been spoilt by the fact that careless habits, the formation of which could easily have been checked by sensible criticism, were allowed to pass unnoticed, and so develop into serious vices. In this matter we must distinguish between persons in whom the abnormality is congenital and those in whom it is acquired. Where there is an inborn perversion, only in the rarest cases can the evil be remedied, though even in such cases much may be done by suggestion. Where, however, as in the great majority of cases, we have to deal with an acquired abnormality, teachers and parents may, by the application of proper methods, succeed in bringing the child back to the right path.

Drum Lessons

There are teachers who merely drum lessons into their pupils' ears without paying attention to their physical and moral welfare. Still, in the last decade we have become less prudish, and there are now

many schools in which instruction is given on the most important questions of sex. If this is done with proper understanding, the benefit may be considerable. There is a way of speaking which is suitable for addressing children and which attracts them. Unfortunately few teachers know how to use this style, and it is better to say nothing at all than to treat these matters clumsily.

Children even of the same family are different, and an argument may influence one child far more strongly than another. For many a child a good or a bad mark, or a kind or cross look, is enough. Others are so thick-skinned that the hardest blows scarcely make any impression on them. A private talk is generally more beneficial than a reprimand in the presence of others, because by a reprimand a sensitive nature may be easily wounded, while a defiant one will only be hardened.

This is particularly the case where sexual questions are concerned. A boy whose mind is already besmirched by vice is apt to be quick of hearing in these matters. In dealing with such boys it is best to call things directly and simply by their proper names, in order to prevent unchaste thoughts arising in the child's mind. With other children, again, it is sufficient to give merely the faintest indication. On no account should we resort to evasions or artificial language. Children are often cleverer than we think, and when they perceive that we wish to conceal something from them a curiosity is awakened which later they try to satisfy by illicit means. If we resort to falsehoods, we run the risk of undoing the whole work of a previously sound training. We

should also not be in a hurry to enlighten our children too soon.

How to Tell It

The most natural method is to begin with explaining the fructification and propagation of plants and animals, and then to touch on the sexual life of man. Lessons on the anatomical structure of man supply numerous opportunities. We might have public kinematographic representations of pollenization; or a course containing the essential minimum of instruction for all pupils, down to a fairly low class. In addition the competent teacher might deal with his pupils individually. Often the child goes astray just through lack of a sympathetic friend. We have frequently remarked that our children, when they reached adolescence, were really glad to be told how to keep their sexual life in normal channels, and to protect themselves from harm. It is wrong to leave everything to nature.

Too detailed sexual explanations should not be given publicly, since no one case is like another, and children, as a rule, are not able to reason from analogy. Parents or teachers who have the capacity should try to discuss these problems with the children separately. If there is no other way, schools should engage a special instructor or a doctor for this single purpose.

The ultimate goal of all true education, and of Jewish education in particular, is to make the children servants of God. "I have known him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord and practice loving-kindness and justice, in order that God may bring

upon Abraham what He has promised him" (Gen. xviii. 19).

Among the means which can direct our children to the service of God, the highest place is to be assigned to example. This is the first thing required of parents and educators. It is obvious that corrupt playmates, vicious servants, and bad company in general can seriously hamper the work of the educator. As our Sages say, "Everything connected with the unclean is unclean." And again: "Woe to the evildoer, woe to his neighbor." The child in an evil environment will come to look on evil as something normal and existing in its own right.

There are a number of things which, though regarded by most parents as insignificant, are of great educational importance, and disregard of which may mar the best-planned upbringing. Great harm may be done a child by too close confinement and suppression, interference with its personal freedom. The relation of parents to children should be as unconstrained as possible; the parents should have the children constantly round them and consort with them; they should work, play, walk, and talk with them. They should discuss their studies and occupations, look over their home lessons, and take an interest in their games. Nothing is more hateful than for a parent to keep secret watch on a child, for this undermines confidence and discourages straightforwardness on the part of the child. It is a blessing when love and confidence prevail between children and those who bring them up. The older the children, the greater the freedom which should

be allowed them. Of course, they should never be left entirely without the guidance of their elders, which is of particular value in the transition period.

Many parents imagine that up to the bar-mitzvah age the child requires particular supervision, but that after bar-mitzvah it is sufficiently advanced to look after itself. This is a grave error. The most important age for instruction is the period from sixteen to twenty-two, or, according to some, from eighteen to twenty-four. This is the period during which parents with foresight and understanding will be most anxious to stand by the side of their children in order that their hearts may not be estranged from them.

There must on no account be mysteries in the child's instruction. For this reason every passage in the Bible should be translated with the children and even those which deal with pregnancy and birth should not be skipped. Intelligent children would in any case be able to read these passages subsequently, and would then clothe them with a nimbus of mystery and impure suggestion. It is less dangerous to satisfy the curiosity of a child than to excite it. Every explanation of such passages must be given with brevity and decision and with no air of reluctance. Suitable opportunities may be found on such occasions for speaking of sexual matters. But of course everything depends on knowing the right way.

It is plainly our duty to warn boys in clear words against the consequences of onanism. Naturally it is difficult to lay down precise rules for instruction. Every teacher must go his own way and with due

regard to the nature of the individual child. He may describe a particular case known to him with its tragic results; or, for grown-up pupils, draw their attention to the methods of counteracting onanism advertised in newspapers and point out their fraudulent character. Such talks will arouse the interest without awakening sinful thoughts. It must be explained to them that every departure from the divinely appointed path is sin. "And the Lord was displeased with what Onan did" (Gen. xxxviii. 10). The children must be told how they can lead a godly life in health and happiness, and they will listen eagerly to such conversation, feeling that their own weal or woe depends on it.

As soon as human beings find time hanging heavy on their hands, foolish and evil thoughts rise up in their breasts. It follows then that through abnormal emotions and imaginations wrong standards are set up in the mind, and its sense of purity is weakened. These things have a close bearing on purely sexual questions. The sexual life has its origin in stimulations of the sex glands, which awaken the attention of the individual who experiences them. Bad reading, conversation with immoral persons of either sex, license to see or hear everything, premature visits to plays which emphasize the sexually abnormal—all this leads the mind to sex imaginings, accompanied by certain pleasurable sensations. It is not sufficiently realized that sexual images, and the impulses resulting from them, can also be caused by soft bedding, tight clothing, indulgence in rich or highly seasoned foods, and luxurious living. Even early physical punishment can set loose the first

activities of the sexual impulse and so cause masturbation.

Exercise

Great attention must of course be paid to bodily exercise. Lack of interest and pleasure in study, inattention, drowsiness, and inability to concentrate may be due to deficient nourishment, bad air, and insufficient exercise! For the true happiness of man there is no better maxim than "the sound mind in the sound body." Our Sages, who made it their motto "to love work," procured for themselves in field and garden sufficient natural motion to save them from the necessity of resorting to the substitute of gymnastics. In modern times, Fichte, Hegel, Marx, and Lasalle were the first to give labor its title of nobility, and to adopt the same views in regard to the value of work as our Sages expressed thousands of years ago.

We are not objecting to gymnastic training and gymnastic clubs in themselves, but only against their being carried too far as against other forms of training. It is important for growing children that premature overtaxing of their strength be avoided. Overexertion can cause not only physical harm, such as breathing and digestive troubles, nervousness, and affections of the heart and lungs, but also at times intellectual dullness and diminution of the mental powers. It is the example of the parents which is of the highest consequence; their whole personality exercises so enduring an influence on the children that many educate their children exceedingly well without seeming to do anything special for them. "Decent, respectable people have always far less

difficulty in bringing up their children properly, whereas a blockhead who cannot read himself will find it hard to teach his children to read." [1] In many cases it is still necessary, however, to take great pains with education. If the training is carried out with circumspection and prudence, we may confidently cherish the hope that "the reward will be proportionate to the labor."

The Girl

A remark which I recently heard fall from a man who passes as *froom* and whose name is mentioned with respect in the world of the God-fearing, still rings in my ears: "Ah, it is only for a girl! For a girl it is good enough."

This is a most dangerous error. No Jewish girl should be allowed to grow up without obtaining some acquaintance with Jewish literature and history, becoming familiar with the Bible and imbibing the teaching of Judaism.

By no people have the dignity and honor of women been treasured so highly as by the Jews. The dicta of our Sages are full of references to the high worth of woman, to the esteem and honor due to her, and to the regard which a man should pay to the opinion and advice of his wife. If woman were still to be regarded as a chattel, and if she really played the pitiable part in life that many a man assigns to her, there would be nothing unreasonable in allowing the education of girls to be neglected. But if woman is to occupy the high position Judaism demands, then the education of our daughters

[1] Keller, *Die Leute von Sedwyla.*

must from an early age be conducted with a view to this end. It is not necessary that a young girl should acquire deep knowledge of the Torah. What is necessary is that she should know the practical facts of Kashruth and the Sabbath, the precepts in outline, much as they are found in the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch; that she be able to translate the prayer book and the Pentateuch and where possible the whole of the Bible, and be familiar with the essentials of Jewish history and literature. It is a particularly good thing also for our older girls if they can find opportunities of giving lessons to the children of poor families and doing other social work.

Naturally, we must avoid putting any strain on the girl which is beyond her strength. She must never be set to work, whether physical or mental, which is too difficult for her. She must also have time for interesting games and for enjoyable and not too tiring excursions. From the point of view of mental activity, very much depends on the right training and exercise and rest given to the senses and their organs as well as to the brain.

Some think that in childhood both sexes should have precisely the same occupations and games. This view we cannot accept without qualification. The boundaries drawn by nature must be respected. That is not a good training for girls which fails to bring out the true feminine nature. Modesty should accompany all the actions of a girl. We cannot begin too early to tend with watchful and protecting care the delicate shoot of the feminine character.

The mistakes committed in the education of our girls, especially the pernicious system of making

them needlessly effeminate and unduly cramping their mental outlook, produce in them faults of character at which we must stand aghast. Especially blameworthy is the practice of making girls a byword for weakness. A mother will constantly appeal to the boy with such remarks as, "Shame, to be as cowardly as a girl! Can't you hold out better than your sister?" By such thoughtless expressions as these, many a woman implants a low estimation of her sex in the mind of the girl, and the boy very easily obtains the impression that girls are poor, stupid, awkward creatures and that the boys are incomparably superior. This impression in later life is bound to pervert the relation between the sexes.

It is sometimes confusedly thought that a girl must have her "flapper" years even as the boy has his "hobbledehoy" years. This is quite a mistake. For one thing, there is no comparison between "hobbledehoy" and "flapper" years, as the former come before, the latter after, the age of puberty. The girl also has her "hobbledehoy" period. But then she is a mere child, whereas in the "flapper" stage she is half grown-up.

Sex Education

It is of course risky to offer sexual enlightenment before the proper time. But when this time does come we should be well advised to give such information as will pave the way for a full discussion of these topics later on. There are many good books, especially among the classics, the reading of which can be recommended to girls as a preparation for real

life. Plain speaking with grown children can have only a good influence on their minds. Among the best remedies for the excessive tension of the "flapper" period one should mention first and foremost agricultural and other out-of-door work, which will gradually harden them to all kinds of weather, to pain, and to exertion.

Thus we see how the Jewish education of our daughters should agree in many particulars with the training of non-Jewish girls carried out on rational lines. In bringing up our children we have often made the same mistakes as are made in our non-Jewish surroundings, imagining that everything we see done there is worthy of imitation. For this reason it has been necessary here to call attention to many things which really come under the head of general education.

As regards the specifically Jewish education of our young girls, it must be repeated that the careful study of all Jewish commands and prohibitions, knowledge of the Bible, and precise observance of all religious precepts should be its basis. Let us teach our daughters what is really Jewish in order that they may help to build a home which shall be a temple, and in which every table shall be an altar and every action a service to God, in order that, so trained, they may be worthy to be called the supports and the ministers of the house of Jacob.

The Youth

Strong sense and fine feeling are required by those who will find the way to the soul of youth. It is necessary on the one hand that parents, whose own

passions have long since subsided, should still have sympathy with the wild tumult in the breast of the young; on the other hand, that they should also possess strength to bridle youth's tempestuous impulses and guide them aright, without thereby diminishing his filial love—perhaps even strengthening and increasing it.

As the first dawn blossoms on the youth's cheek, new and hitherto unknown feelings begin to stir in him, expressing themselves frequently in exhibition of selfishness, defiance, boorishness, or sentimentality. In many cases these sexual promptings express themselves in downright abnormalities. The difficulties to be overcome in dealing with such cases are very great. We do not come into the world like angels, as Rousseau thought, but as the Sages said: "The evil inclination dominates man from the moment of his birth, as it says, 'Sin lieth at the door!'" On the one hand, by the practice of the strictest purity a decent aversion to the sex organs must be instilled as well as respect for them.

Along with the sexual prompting, man receives from nature a protection against it in the shape of a strong sense of shame. Till the age of puberty this feeling is only latent, and it can be developed to a certain extent by skillful training even before the age of enlightenment. It is a good sign in a man that he is easily put to blush. The earlier a man loses this sense the more is he to be pitied. He who mocks the confusion of his companion is no true friend and should be avoided. How beautiful is the prayer that a Jew says every morning: "May

it be Thy will, O Lord and the God of my fathers, to preserve me this day and every day from shameless men and from shamelessness, from bad men and bad companions, and from a bad neighbor."

So also say our Sages in the "Ethics of the Fathers": "Keep far from a bad neighbor, and associate not with a wrongdoer." Woe to him who in the difficult years of the transition period is left without guidance or falls into bad society. The Talmud asks (Babli Abodah Zarah, 18): "Why does it say at the beginning of the Psalms, 'Happy is the man that hath not walked in the council of the wicked, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the mockers'?" And the answer is: "He who walks in the council of the wicked will easily be induced to stand in the way of sinners; and he who stands there will easily come to sit, and so finally to blaspheme, with the others." Even one who does not participate in the evil actions of his friends or companions is still affected by their taint; as the Midrash puts it, "An evil smell clings to one who visits a tannery, even if he has not himself touched the skin."

The place where the youth's character is first to be formed is naturally the home. Normally the youth is still tied to his home by the strongest bonds of physical and spiritual kinship. Nothing can exercise so abiding an influence on the disposition and character of the young man as the home life. It was the love shown by his parents to him which even in childhood kindled his own love for them, for his brothers and sisters and for all men, and it is the

sight of their love and piety which, when he is grown to youth, kindles in him the spark of love and piety and trust in God.

Not Always at Home

The youth cannot remain always in his parents' house. Temptation still comes to him some time or other. Just as Joseph in such a moment saw his father's figure rise before his eyes, and was thus withheld from sin, so should every youth have a holy awe of the parent's eye stamped on his heart.

The young man's daily occupation, his intercourse with strangers, the manners and customs of his surroundings, the clubs and societies he visits, the restaurants and amusements which he frequents, the newspapers and books he reads, and much else make a strong impression on his mind. If parents have guided his childhood with devotion and understanding, and if they have been conscious of their further responsibility for him during the years of adolescence, then temptation will only cause the good in the young man to ripen more fully, and he will be strong enough to keep bad companions at a distance. It is easy to see that in the opposite case the memory can call up nothing which attaches it to the good, and then external influences can only too easily pervert his better impulses.

The youth who studies the Torah should overcome all difficulties of the transition period much more easily than one to whom the understanding of the noble teaching of our Sages has been rendered difficult or inaccessible. The Torah itself is the best means for overcoming the impulse to evil.

Where there is little knowledge of the Torah, various corruptions appear among us, just as in non-Jewish circles. As parents and teachers are not as a rule sufficiently versed in psychiatry, psychology, and moral philosophy to deal with such problems, it is evident that a special teacher or physician is required. Here we must add that we should seek for our children Jewish experts, who are at the same time loyal to the Jewish religion and learned in the Torah. The expert for whom the teaching of the Torah spells the highest wisdom is the one peculiarly qualified to preserve in the Jewish youth its freshness and purity, and to turn its thoughts to higher objects.

Jewish Experts

Let no one think that such a task is a small one. A pious Jewish physician, whom I induced to take up the kind of work I have mentioned, and who in time produced excellent results, told me later that it took him fully two years to comprehend his office rightly, but that from that point he experienced boundless joy in exercising it. Two years of hard work were required before this excellent physician recognized that the task of assisting youth in their time of need and rescuing them spiritually, saving their souls, if we may use the expression, is even nobler than that of freeing the sick from bodily infirmities, important as this is. Can there be any more blessed feeling than to be a witness of the more than earthly happiness which follows the calming and soothing of a deeply stirred human heart?

There are other points that may be mentioned in

connection with the training of youth. Cases are known to me of youths having been led astray simply through receiving too much pocket money from their mothers. Of course, imperfect self-mastery was the real cause of the immoral action, and the pocket money only the indirect cause. But opportunity often makes the thief. I also know of cases in which youth through always having had too little pocket money or none at all fell into bad ways, either through procuring money by illicit means or else through suddenly coming into possession of more than they knew how to manage. Sensible parents will give their children, especially when they are a little older, adequate pocket money, insisting, of course, that large expenditures should be accounted for.

Idleness

"Idleness is the beginning of mischief" is a saying that applies not only to children but even more to youths. It is important that their free time should be used properly no less than their working hours; and their delight in games and sports must aid their physical, mental, and moral development. Such things as boxing, swimming, skating excursions, and games of all kinds afford an outlet for the high animal spirit of youth. But physical well-being and development are not everything; the spirit must also be cultivated. We must beware of artificially fostering an exaggerated and unhealthy love of sport.

Parents must not be so mistrustful of their children as to think they will do wrong if they are not watched. As the youth grows older and becomes

more conscious of his powers, the watch over his goings and doings must be relaxed and he must be accustomed to a certain measure of independence. Naturally, sensible parents will keep a watchful eye over the general conduct of their elder children in order that they may always be at hand to warn or help them when they are in danger. The problem is to institute a just balance between home and society—on the one side to give the young man company, on the other, to keep him attached to his home.

The Jewish community is always made responsible for the sins of the individual Jew. Hence, the young Jew should have a deep sense of his responsibility to the Jewish community. When youths who have left school think they can best show their independence by spending in clubs the evenings which otherwise would be devoted to the family circle, it is not difficult to see that this must lead them from Judaism. Jewish life does not exhaust itself in politics and criticism. Jewish study groups which make it their object to study diligently under the sage guidance of a competent teacher, do not estrange children from the parents' house, but bring them nearer to it. Jewish parents, as soon as their son is fit therefor, should send him for at least a year, and if possible for several years, to a Torah seminary. Sitting at the feet of the wise, he may by diligent study obtain an insight into the deeper mysteries of the Torah. Upon one who has penetrated into the deeper recesses of the Torah, moral corruption will not easily encroach. Such a one draws the clear, purifying, sanctifying water from the eternal

spring of salvation, he strengthens his spirit, he ennobles his heart, and assures his happiness for all the days of his life.

The Young Woman

In contrast with the view common among some nations, that woman is at her best before marriage, and that marriage is at the best a necessary evil, Judaism regards the woman before marriage as being still in some way incomplete. She attains her perfection in marriage, and insofar as she decides to remain unmarried she can never fulfill her proper vocation in life. Only by the side of her husband and in union with him does she fully perform her task as woman and Jewess. It is therefore fit and proper that the grown girl should regard it as a duty to prepare herself for marriage.

This is all the more difficult as the girl at this period as a rule has not yet completed her development. Her moods vary and she becomes changeable and capricious. She grows hypersensitive, imagines that she is not understood, and wants to be alone. Later, an intense longing for friendship comes over her. Sometimes, too, a morbid love of imitation and dreamy melancholy are strongly developed in her. The tendency of her mind may show itself in an insatiate reveling in suffering and discomfort, or else in an excessive soft-heartedness. "It is the age of reveries, of dreaming, of vivid imaginings." It is the age of idealism—in which the ideals are formed that govern the whole future life. The critical spirit also wakes in her and makes her a sharp-tonged judge of morals. Her likes and

dislikes are sharply defined and admit of no compromise.

It is obvious that a person in such a condition cannot always be trusted to choose rightly. When a girl buys a dress or a pair of stockings, the greatest care is exercised in the choice; but she usually takes a husband blindfold. The two young people have not yet learned to know one another as comrades. Instead of examining one another's character, they allow senses to be deceived by impulse. The best guaranty for happiness is offered by a marriage in which love is ennobled by reason and reason suffused by love.

Choosing a Mate

Choice should not follow mere inclination, but should be preceded by careful regard to character also. The voice of passion hinders calm reflection. It is the Jewish custom to recognize the judgment of father and mother. Their judgment is matured by experience, and their suggestion is usually the one which is likely to lead to the happiest result. Naturally, wise parents will always pay regard to the suggestion of the heart and will not refuse their consent without weighty reason.

Let us grant, on the other hand, that some Jewish fathers allow material considerations to prevail with them. When a father "sells" his daughter to a rich husband who cannot and never will love her, such a transaction is nothing less than a crime. It is clear that, in an environment in which conjugal infidelity is not merely tolerated but accepted as a social institution, sinful ideas can hardly fail to infect

Jewish circles also. This applies for the most part to those who have long since broken with the practical observance of the precepts of the Torah and are Jewish only in name. In places like Paris, Berlin, and Vienna in Jewish so-called "high life" a happy marriage is exceptional. The stronger the tendency to assimilate in any Jewish group, the greater the number of unhappy marriages; whereas among those who have taken the law of the Torah as guide even the poorest parents scorn to allow money or property to influence them in deciding on their daughter's choice.

Anomalies of Jewish Social Life

One of the many anomalies of our social life is that, while motherhood is represented as the highest and the only true calling of woman, and has all kinds of eulogies lavished on it, the future mothers are brought up without any regard to their destiny. When we engage a governess, we examine her credentials most carefully. Nurses and housekeepers cannot obtain a place without proving their capacity. But the vocation of mother, which is the most important of all, is undertaken without any preparation. In this case we rely on mere instinct.

Even in regard to matters of physique and the care of health, the ignorance of many mothers is boundless. Girls are brought up without receiving the least instruction on the nature, the functions, and the needs of their bodies, and unsuspectingly commit many offenses against their health. They

enter the state of matrimony without knowing what to do in the period of pregnancy for their own protection and the welfare of the child. They do not know the commonest causes of illness or the most elementary rules of health, nor the composition and value of foodstuffs. Thus endless errors are committed for which the child has to suffer. It is the sacred duty of parents to take an active interest in the training of their grown daughters if they wish to save them from later unpleasantness. This is the time when the young woman should learn all the *dinim* (laws) which apply to a Jewess, and should seek to imbibe the idealism of our prophets; when under proper guidance she should familiarize herself with the boundless moral wealth of Jewish teaching. Once she knows what true Jewish culture is, the study of non-Jewish culture will serve only to sharpen her appetite for a knowledge of Jewish standards and ideals.

Women and Sport

The first and simplest requisite for a wife is that she be truly womanly in thought and action, and at the same time know how to adapt herself to a man's needs. But extreme indulgence in sport, which is to-day the fashion with many Jewish girls, is ruinous. In order to experience the glory of motion it is not necessary for girls and women to do violence to their own nature. Certainly they can jump and run, play ball and swing clubs, swim and skate, insofar as no danger is incurred in so doing. But when a Jewish girl finds her greatest

happiness in being a member of an athletic club or in boxing with other girls, she is overstepping the bounds of the normal and wholesome. It is a grave error to imagine that there is anything conducive to the moral and physical welfare of girls in making athletes of them. The games which make great demands on the physical powers, such as football, cricket, hockey and baseball, are only likely to endanger motherhood. The physical structure of woman is such that, when she overexerts certain muscles, the organs which constitute her womanhood are destroyed or seriously injured. With this goes an increasing proneness to hysteria, which becomes a source of pain and anxiety both to herself and her surroundings, especially to her husband. Eighty per cent of the women who have won distinction in sport are barren. Conditions to-day make it advisable for the woman to contribute to the maintenance of the home so that the young girl, however wealthy her parents, feels it desirable to learn a profession. Many gain their living as stenographers, bookkeepers and saleswomen. Where there is a special inclination or capacity, a girl may become a teacher, nurse, writer, or even physician. In all cases, however, care should be taken that such calling does not hinder the performance of the woman's task of Jewish wife and mother.

When a girl can give an affirmative answer to the question, Am I fit myself? she may then put the question, Can I think of this man as the father of my child? To answer this she must examine his character, health, religious opinions, general views on life, capacity to earn a living, and his disposition.

The Family

"Thy wife is like a fruitful vine in the midst of thy house, thy children are like olive branches round thy table" (Ps. cxxviii. 3).

A distinguished baron and his wife were once relating interesting incidents of their travels in India. During a brief pause one lady interposed, "Your children will be delighted to greet their parents and hear such wonderful stories. How long is it since you have seen them?" "Almost two years." "Almost two years!" exclaimed other members of the company. "I could never have stood it so long," cried one lady. "Nor we either," said a married couple. "Did you at least always have good news from your children?" The conversation turning on children, the travelers felt themselves obliged to give their views on their bringing-up. "Do you think," said the baron, "that we are here for the children's sake? We should be stupid indeed to be willing to embitter our lives for the sake of the four young scamps. Our children live in our castle under the supervision of a tutor and a governess, and want for nothing." It was not possible, he declared, to do more for the children. If one was to be always caring and fretting about one's young, then life would be a burden, and there would be no end of petty annoyances. Since one could in no way influence the destiny of a fellow creature, the most sensible thing was not to worry at all about children. The wife agreed with her husband entirely.

We need hardly point out that such a view is in direct contradiction to Jewish teaching. The Bible,

according to a fine interpretation which is grammatically defensible, says, "Be fruitful and bring up"; i.e., marry and beget and train children. If it had merely said "be fruitful," parents like the baron would have fulfilled their duty. But it further says "and bring up"—which is the essential thing. Motherhood, also, is not merely childbearing. Motherhood includes the duty of rearing, which is a grave moral responsibility. The mother cannot be replaced by the governess or trained companion, however well-meaning they may be. Only through training the children to be "in the image of God" does marriage acquire its moral significance. The apple grows from the seed automatically; the calf is born from the cow complete in its kind. But human beings must keep in view the further object of training the coming generation to serve God and to walk in ways of virtue and justice.

Essence of Marriage

The mere fact that the husband and wife regard marriage as a divine union is a guaranty of happiness. We live in a strange world nowadays. What the pious Jew regards as a deadly sin is counted in society as a mere peccadillo and as a legitimate way of bettering one's position. We Jews do not pervert the natural order. It is our firm conviction that nothing less than the profoundest wisdom has inspired the ordinance that after the period of purification marital relationship should on no account be resumed until the wife has bathed up to the crown of her head in a *mikvah*.[2] Learned professors

[2] See the Epilogue.

of hygiene admire the sanitary wisdom of this rule; psychologists point to the constant renewal and reënforcement of happiness which follow its observance. Even the layman to-day must wonder how the close periods laid down for women in the Torah coincide with those prescribed by modern hygiene. The wisdom of such precepts seem to us too lofty for any words to do justice to it (Job xxxvii. 20). No one will characterize such self-restraint as asceticism, and no one who is not blinded by prejudice will regard laws of purity and cleanliness as slave morality.

The Jewish woman finds her true vocation only when she becomes a mother. Every woman in the world has at one time or another to decide whether motherhood or eroticism shall be the dominant motive in her life. For the Jewish woman motherhood is the culmination, the full harmonizing of her being. Eve was the mother of life, the chosen instrument of perpetuation of life through offspring. Where a woman feels no longing for children, something in her is not as it should be. Resignedly the Jewish mother offers up her own ego, knowing that in the facing of travail lies her transfiguration and greatness, and that by dominating herself she can attain freedom in the higher sense. Concerning the purpose of man and divine government, what loftier words have ever been spoken than those to which Hannah gave utterance in the song of motherhood? (I Sam. ii. 1-10.) From the yearning to be a mother and from the joy of being a mother, the Jewish woman draws her deepest insight into the meaning of life. You who have been present when a human

being was born, testify truly, was it not a sublime moment? The most abandoned criminal has respect for the germinating life and stands awe-struck at the divine power which manifests itself when for the first time the mother's eye looks into the eye of the child.

The French System

Where the marriage is not blessed with children, this is usually a cause of sadness for Jewish couples, and the more numerous "the olive branches round our table," the greater our joy. It has been reserved for our own time for Jews to carry assimilation so far that they no longer feel equal to the training and maintenance of a large family and to adduce pseudo-moral grounds either for not marrying at all, or for desiring no children, or for adopting the two-children standard. Whatever motive may be alleged, such a view is not Jewish.

It is true that economic reasons are largely responsible for late marriages. Misery is in certain cases likely to be the result of a too early marriage. But in most cases the notion that one will not be able to bring up a family simply shows want of trust in God.

By trusting in God we do not mean that a man should not do his own full share. Only when a man has done all in his power can he rely on his Creator not to desert him. He who does not possess a home, or who does not earn so much that he could found a modest household, should not marry. Deserved unhappiness is the hardest to bear.

In the Jewish view the wife is a helper who assists her husband to bear his burden. She is his

second self. The wife makes the husband's task easier for him; she supports him in the performance of his own special work. Through her the man obtains strength to labor and create. "If thy wife is small, bend down and listen to her" (B. M. 59). "Speak with them in a soft tone, as our teacher Moses by God's command spoke softly with them" (Midrash Bereshith Rabbah, a 1). Abraham said in answer to the angel's query that Sarah was in the tent. The honor of a woman rests in the domestic circle. "She opens her mouth with wisdom, kindly instruction dwells on her tongue. She watches over the ways of her house, she never eateth the bread of idleness" (Prov. xxxi). Through the merit of virtuous women our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt. The impetuosity of the man is fitly curbed by the fine sense and tenderness of the woman, and the more volatile mind of the woman is steadied by the firmness and decision of the man. So both support and supplement one another, and labor together untiringly to achieve the highest of which they are capable. United, they find their great happiness in wholehearted devotion to what they have recognized as the holiest duties of life.

But the most holy bond of Jewish marriage is constituted by the children. What have we better than our children? It is they who perpetuate our life, it is they whose happiness conditions our happiness. To bring up children and children's children in the spirit of the Torah, and so far as possible to guarantee that the coming generations also shall make themselves worthy of the divine promises and

blessings—that, in sober truth, is the deep charm of Jewish family life. "Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the great and terrible day of God comes; he shall bring the heart of the fathers back to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers" (Mal. iii. 23).

The Purpose of Life

The question whether life has a purpose is one which lies at the root of all moral strivings; and the more we ponder it, the more difficult we find it to give an answer. When all is said and done, I do not know what I am, or what the world is that surrounds me. It is true that I labor to provide for my wife and children, and undergo hardship in order that they may not hunger. But every beast of prey does as much, and I cannot pretend to find herein the goal and object of existence. Our brief span is full of toil, want, anxiety, and pain, and in the midst of the travail we would often like to know whether anything is to come of it at all. I have a feeling that higher powers also have been vouchsafed to me and that I have been sent here to fulfill a mission, although I cannot say precisely how I shall satisfy my craving for self-expression. Is everything aimless and useless, without sense or meaning? And if not, if life has a rational content, what is this content, and where is the purpose and object?

I look around me and see a world in every detail of which order rules. One and the same law governs all the things that grow, from the smallest to the greatest—the law that each can develop only within

the narrow circuit assigned to its kind. Instinctively each seeks to develop along the lines suited to its innate tendencies and capacities. In the eternal law of propagation according to species we see something positive, real, and indisputable.

On a superficial view we frequently get the impression that human skill can produce new forms. Closer observation, however, shows us that every apparent departure from the norm is due to special circumstances and can be readily explained.

The Cosmic Rhythm

Philosophy no less than religion recognizes the universal reign of law and finds the cosmos pervaded by a rational purpose. In every organism and arrangement of nature we find a perfect adaptation of means to end. In the greatest diversity and multiplication of details we find a wonderful order and unity, so that on intelligent examination we cannot help assuming that nothing in the creation is without goal, object, and purpose. Only the school of theoretical egoism denies connection and law, order and purpose, in the world and makes chance the supreme arbiter. But the man who holds that only his own consciousness exists, belongs, as Schopenhauer tells us, to the madhouse. Such a man lives for the moment and knows no better use for life than to scratch every enjoyment which the day offers, to pluck every flower which he finds by the wayside. He fancies he knows the art of life, but in reality he is only a riotous debauchee who is ignorant of the true beauties and delights which the world contains. It should be a source of deep satis-

faction to us that religion and philosophy concur in holding that order rules the world, and that unswerving obedience to law is the basic characteristic of every force in the universe. From the corn seed to the solar system everything moves in its preordained course. Man alone is not the creature of necessity. He is able with clear insight to analyze himself, to reflect on his actions with experience, and to pursue and finally attain a goal which he has recognized as the right one. It is only the herd-man who derives his motives entirely from his environment and whose activities are completely determined by the influence of his surroundings. The richer the inner life of a man, the greater his choice of motives. The free man is not only influenced by the outer world, but in turn reacts upon it; he gives to his environment more than he takes from it and enriches mankind with the legacy of his individuality. We are born in the same way as the animals, like the plants and animals we feed, grow, age, and die. We feel in ourselves powers and impulses similar to those which we notice in them, and like them are subject to the great law of propagation by species. We, however, can raise ourselves from the sphere of necessity to the sphere of freedom. As free agents we accept the law of species and allow our powers, impulses, and volitions to be dominated by it. As free agents we are able with clear vision to choose a goal in life and strive for its attainment.

Freedom and Destiny

Through being free, man, in spite of all his intellectual achievements, is subject to error, and in cer-

tain respects the history of human progress is the history of human error. The capacity for freedom is a fatal gift as soon as we wander from the path of truth. When a man errs in the conception of his destiny and for years or even for a whole lifetime pursues a goal which is not the right one, but perhaps the very opposite, it is indeed a misfortune. It is natural that we should often err since being but mortal we cannot take all the factors into account. Only the highest Power knows why He has created us and what is the ultimate goal of creation. We find comfort in the thought that it is our Creator who guides our activities, who makes us His tools for His ultimate designs. So soon as we speak of our destiny we presuppose the existence of an eternal creative reason, which creates everything for some purpose, and that a good one. By God's will we have been brought into the world. Plainly, the object of our existence can be only to fulfill the will of Him who has sent us here. But how shall we make our way faultlessly through the sea of existence if we have no compass to guide us? God alone can enlarge the natural boundaries of our limited reason and, for our good, impart to us truths which we might not be able to discover for ourselves. Accordingly the Almighty in his goodness has revealed His will to us, in order that we may not wander aimlessly through life. It is no disgrace for the mariner to guide his course by the lighthouse. Our object is thus a kind of free obedience. Along with the capacity to sin, possibilities of free obedience are implanted in us. This free obedience is unquestionably the highest stage. Precisely through

free submission to the divine law can man raise his race to the full height of its destiny.

The Sacred Book tells us, "God created man in His image." God desires truth, mercy, justice, and love to be promoted on earth. He has sent man as his deputy on earth to bring these ideas of fulfillment. It is in the essence of man, created in the image of God, to strive after ever higher stages of spirituality and morality. To strive after divine holiness is the destiny of man.

Even those who regard virtue alone as the goal of man must admit that the religious feeling is the deepest ground of morality. We who regard the imitation of God as our goal must demand that this too shall express itself in a really moral life. The imitation of God through moral self-improvement must be our highest ideal in life. We can do nothing better than raise to the highest power any virtues that we have ever seen in man, and continually widen their scope.

Editor's Epilogue

Such of us as study the conditions of our time know that what gnaws at the vitals of modern society is sexual looseness. That a great deal of physical suffering, of afflicted childhood, of disease and degeneracy is due to it. That divorce is the logical result of unpreparedness, morally speaking, or of license. Never more than to-day do we need the teaching of Judaism on the question of love and life.

During the last year I have made a special study of the sex problem. I believe I have read every

modern book which has any claim to authenticity or even to the attention of the serious academic reader. I have included popular handbooks and heavy tomes —Dr. Mary Stopes and an American symposium, the latest Forel Foerster and Dr. Ascher's splendid volume, Carlebach's *Rathgeber,* and a number of less-known publications. And as I reflect now on the sum total of their combined messages I am somewhat astonished by the fact that, with one or two exceptions, they have not yet touched the crux of the problem. I have perused a dozen volumes and pamphlets on women's suffrage and the woman question and mental hygiene and hysteria; I have gone to Freud for some things and have found others, until I became weary and almost despondent. Words, words, words!!!

But then, suddenly, a thought struck me. I want to set down in unemotional terms what has come to me in the form of a new interpretation of our purity laws.

A Very Grave Problem

Women have been battling for emancipation, for the right to be even as men, in the many fields of human work. Women have stormed bastille after bastille, they sit in the courts to judge, in the manager's office, in the parliaments of many a nation. But they have neglected the emancipation of *woman* in their work for the emancipation of *women.* There is not a single system of life, either actual or theoretical, which allows woman even in marriage complete control over her soul and her body, which makes her mistress of herself in physical as in spiritual matters.

There is ebb and tide in woman's life, just as there is ebb and tide in every human relationship. There is a period of rest and a period of work, a time when emotions lie dormant and when the heart asks for love, a time when to give is to take and when loneliness is the greatest blessing. Woman has such time and natively knows such waves of emotion and sentiment, the desire for companionship and the yearning for fullness, rest, and bottomless solitude.

But the same woman who battles for her rights in the political arena has not yet grasped her duties to herself in her own home. She would collectively rebel against any infringement of her public privileges, yet suffers domestic degradation. So that woman, even the modern woman, has very frequently become a means in marriage instead of being an end in herself. And that brings about a loss of self-respect and the consequent deterioration of the marital level.

How can we solve the problem? What is its solution? The only satisfactory solution has been offered by Jewish law, and there it has not been found as the result of a slow development or of a sudden emergency. It is as old as the Torah itself. It has not been achieved by fiery oratory or by overwhelming feminist influence. It has nothing to do with "votes for women." It is the cardinal principle of Jewish law, the word of God, that the Jewish woman is granted complete control over her body and soul during the time when she is most in need of it. Such law is not created by majority vote. It presupposes a completely new orientation in the matter of sex. It presupposes a different sex-

Weltanschauung. It leaves to love all its beauty, but it makes it sacred. It raises marriage to the sanctity of humanity, whose propagation is divine, whose forces are, every one of them, a part of God's spirit in man, of the *évolution créatrice morale,* which is human history. Thank God we Jews have it, I mean we Jews who honor Jewish law.

The Outward Symbol

Without this consciousness of the sacred function of our vital forces, man's married love is a degraded affair. With it, it holds prospects of great beauty. And lest by a sudden gust of passion or the inert brutality of the thoughtless, that ethical strength be withdrawn and thus all splendor fade from love life, the Torah has appointed the ceremony to keep guard at the entrance to the home of love, so that man may respect the frontier, that woman may ever again consecrate herself to the fullness of her love. The ceremony of the immersion (*tevilah*) is but an outward symbol of an inward glory, but it is the outward form which holds all the inward worth. Where this form has been preserved intact, there indeed it has harbored marvelous comradeship and unfailing love, because husband and wife revered the rite and hence lived together in never-flagging respect and interest. Love as a mere sum total of sensations, without the spirituality which self-restraint creates, without the comradeship which mutual respect brings about, without the independence which understanding and consideration condition, is a pitiful thing. Neither unrestrained passion, which leads to surfeit, nor celibacy nor her-

mit life are in the plan of the Creator, but creative love, parenthood of beautiful, healthy children—all that is in accord with the very purpose of human existence, all that is enduring, all that makes men and women nobler and happier.

That is only one aspect and a less obvious one of the self-revelatory strength of Torah; but even that may suffice to bring home a sense of the appalling losses suffered by Jews who, unwilling to bear the burden of moral nobility, would rather follow the lower standards of the soulless clown than deny themselves the fling of clumsy passion.

We know of no finer program for married life than the promise given by the groom on the *kethubah* (Jewish marriage certificate): "Become thou my wife according to the law of Moses and Israel, and I shall honor you, serve you, and provide for you, according to the manner of Jewish husbands, each of whom honors, serves and provides for his wife in truth."

IX

A SURVEY OF JEWISH HISTORY

BY

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IX

A SURVEY OF JEWISH HISTORY

The history of the Jewish people may be divided into two main periods: Israel in its home land, and Israel in exile. The dividing line comes somewhere at the end of the second century of the common era.

I. The First Period

Preliminary Stage: From Abraham to Moses
(-1225 B.C.E.)

Israel's coming into being as a nation may be designated as the preliminary stage of the first period. The family of Abraham disengages itself out of the East Armenian race group, and Abraham himself, impelled by the voice of God, leaves his home, to teach the strangers of Canaan the belief in one God as Creator of heaven and earth, and to live in accordance with this belief. He seemed a veritable prince of God to his amazed and admiring neighbors. After many vicissitudes, his only son Isaac, who resembled him, also thus asserted himself; but only one of the sons of Isaac, Jacob, remained loyal to the family tradition. Jacob succeeded in rearing all his twelve sons as the heads of tribes, who, through hardship and struggle, became worthy upholders of the mission of Abraham. The family of Jacob, having multiplied and become a

people, suffered both physically and spiritually through the long miserable years of exile and slavery in Egypt, but nevertheless became a source of fear to its oppressors, because of its ever-increasing numbers. Only faint traces of the idea of God could remain in this horde of slaves; their strongest memory was that of the glory of their ancestors. Their miraculous liberation, coming not as a result of their own strength but because of their great task of becoming God's people, as well as the destruction of the forces of Pharaoh, turned this pack of slaves into a nation. But the people could not yet be prepared to understand the loftiness of its mission. The extraordinary experience of the revelation on Mount Sinai found it still unprepared. Notwithstanding the fact that Israel seemed to have risen to this tremendous event, the reaction followed only too soon. The law delivered at Sinai was indeed no outgrowth of the spirit of this people; it came to them from without, pointing the way to the goal. Loaded down by centuries of slavery, the masses quickly fell from the divine heights into the depths of idol worship. Only a tangible god could fully express their thought and feeling. It was during a period of forty years' wandering in the desert that Moses took a new generation, free in spirit and in body, and made of it a proper people of God. This generation was deemed worthy to enter the Holy Land and to begin to build God's state.

From the Conquest of Canaan to the Destruction of the First Temple (1180-586 B.C.E.)

Now began the new life of these people as the nation of the Torah—the realization of the "God-

idea" through a people as a political unit. That a few religious individuals should strive toward holiness was not sufficient; the whole organized mass—the state—now became the worshiper of God, besides shouldering the ordinary economic burdens of a political state which they had been free from in the desert. Though with political conditions like those of other nations, Israel had to succeed as a theocracy, a nation ruled by divine power, thus to emphasize the central idea of godliness and the life that strives for sanctity. Never before had a task of like loftiness been set to a people; nothing could be compared with it. We may compare the position of Israel, then, to the highest peaks of the Alps or of the Lebanon, which in their snowy purity reach into the sunny blue of heaven, though standing firmly planted in the living earth, and from whose glaciers clear mountain streams flow to water the warm lowlands. Such an exalted race Israel might be said to have been upon the holy ground of Palestine, diffusing to the peoples of the earth the crystal clear and refreshing teachings of God. To have been considered worthy of such a task must remain a distinction for all time, even if the goal may never be fully attained.

The nation began to find its task difficult. The second generation soon yielded to defeat. After the death of Joshua and his comrades, the nation was only too often in need of a leader to awaken the people to their duty. True enough, men arose now and then who reminded Israel of what it should be doing; names like Samuel and David, Jehosaphat and Hezekiah, Elijah and Isaiah, Josiah and Jeremiah, still shine over us with splendor enough to

light up all time. These, however, were only individual great men whose value, indeed, was never to be discounted, but who, nevertheless, could not lastingly hold the whole nation up to their level. The states which served only God still remained nothing more than an ideal toward which the future generations of some more fortunate era might approach. It never was realized for any length of time. Verily, the holy Temple did stand upon Mount Moriah, the symbol of the proximity of God; but ever and anon did Israel fall from the heights assigned to it as God's people, until at last it was nothing more than an empty house. The Jewish people were ensconced between the mighty Nation of the Two Rivers on the one side and the Nation of the Nile on the other, both with their highly developed civilization and their immense concentration of power. It was Israel's task to prove to the world that consecration to the law of God fortifies man and is greater than all the worldly wealth of mighty governments. The economic life of Israel, supported as it was by the teachings of God, should have led the nations of the world to recognize that there stood upon the temple mount of Zion the source of all that is holy in the life of the individual and in that of the nations. But the ideal of sanctifying the nation remained an ideal.

Fall of Samaria (722 B.C.E.) *and Jerusalem* (586 B.C.E.)

In the midst of the continued quarrels as to what Israel was and what it ought to be, the state was shattered. Only a few decades after the building

of the Temple did the fearful assault occur that tore the large part of the nation away; and after four centuries of intermittent rising toward God and falling away to idolatry the State of Judea was also destroyed. But as the everlasting glory of this struggle we have the prophets, those who despairingly reminded the Jewish people of their mission. It was they who reënunciated moral standards which put Judaism above land and state. Those thoughts from the deepest sources of God's teachings, which were put into words by Amos, Micah, and many other inspired men, became the watchwords of the nation as it struggled onward. They became the eternal possession of the people, to comfort them through long centuries of oppression and wretchedness to come. They were also the messengers of God's thoughts on earth, from the rising of the sun to its setting. They were the seeds of morality in the cultures of many nations.

Laden with the guilt of the past and with its own sinfulness, but strengthened by the teachings of the word of God, the people of Jechaniah and of Zedekiah were forced into the exile of Babylonia, where, in the home land of its first father, it strove for a rebirth.

From the Babylonian Exile to the Fall of the Persian Empire (586-333 B.C.E.)

The years of the Babylonian Exile were a period of purification for Israel. Much of the nation might indeed have been lost through assimilation with the Babylonians, so powerful, so rich, and so learned in fields that the Jews had heretofore hardly known.

But the words of warning and scorn with which Isaiah had long before scourged the idol worship of the victorious Babylonians were not without effect; and now the steady growth of an invincible loyalty to God manifested itself. The forewarnings of the great prophets were being fulfilled, word for word. Babylon had to drink of the cup of great sorrow (539). Its conqueror, Cyrus, became the emancipator of the Jewish exiles. Only a relatively small group took advantage of the permission to return home, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, descendant of David, and Joshua, the high priest (538). The majority of the people, and with them many great personalities, remained behind in the land of exile.

The balance of power in the development of the people and their history, however, shifted again to the land of Israel. Here was the stage upon which the Jewish people continued to play their part in world history for the next few centuries. It was Babylonia, however, that served as the almost inexhaustible reservoir from which the home land for some time to come drew its ever-fresh powers. Not even a century elapsed before the Jews of Palestine, in spite of the presence of the rebuilt Temple, yielded to assimilation with the neighboring peoples. Thereupon, Ezra and Nehemiah (458-430) appeared out of the East, as regenerators of their people.

The Kenesset Gedola (Great Synod)

A stream of men inspired by the Torah accompanied these two leaders. Then followed in Palestine the period of the *Kenesset Gedola,* when the

Torah was permanently anchored in the midst of the Jewish people. These great educators understood how, by innumerable and detailed ordinances of living, to bind the nation with unbreakable threads to God and His law. It was a time of peace and of political quiescence such as the nations of the Orient seldom enjoyed. The rule of the Achamenides extended from India to the Ethiopian Mountains. Palestine was no longer a borderland; it was part of a world empire, blessed with peace. The lack of absolute independence was fully compensated for by the protection afforded by the kings of Persia, who did not interfere at all with any local government. Now the study of God's law was extensive among the Jews. It seemed almost as if this period was granted to the Jewish people as an opportunity to prepare themselves for the hard spiritual struggles yet to come.

From Alexander the Great to Independence (333-165 B.C.E.)

Alexander the Great broke up the empire of the Achamenides (333). Macedonians and Hellenists overran the East. The tremendous plan of a union between the Greek world and the Orient filled the mind of the great conqueror. His early death was hardly the reason for the failure of his plans; it only prevented him from witnessing their collapse. Then began the conflict among his successors. Asia and Egypt again were torn apart. For more than a hundred years Palestine was the foreland of Egypt against the Syrian Empire of the Seleucidans, only to be conquered by the latter and be made the bor-

derland against the Ptolemys of Egypt. After having enjoyed the peace of a central province, it now became the object of contention between two rival powers.

But more terrific by far than battles and war were the tremendous spiritual struggles of Judaism and Hellenism. The latter could not overcome the culture of those lands whence came the culture of Asia Minor; but it easily overpowered the lands on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The strong upper class of Syria and Egypt had been Hellenized for many decades. Only the tiny land of the Jews struggled to keep itself spiritually independent. Men like Simon the Just (d. 291) exploited the whole power of their personality in order to stem the tide of Hellenism. Not beauty and truth, pure and simple, stood in opposition to each other; but the problem involved the analysis of what was the domain of each and which of these two principles was to govern man's life. To the Jew, truth was the seal of God; to make it beautiful was praiseworthy, but it was never to be done at the expense of truth. To the Hellenists of the Orient, beauty came first. The political and economic leaders of Palestine supported this view, and in addition came the influence of the strongly Hellenized Jews of Alexandria. They were the people who first brought God's law to the Greeks.

The First Translation

It has indeed been the tragic fate of the Jewish people that the bearers of its truths to other nations have ultimately estranged themselves from Judaism,

and thus have lost their identity in the midst of strangers. The day upon which the Bible was translated into Greek upon the command of the Egyptian sovereign, Ptolemaus Philadelphus (283-246), was the beginning of a new period in the culture of the Hellenic peoples; but Israel suffered as a result, even as from the day of the golden calf. It is not seemly to mourn over an occurrence which brought humanity a step farther in its development; yet we cannot rejoice when our own people suffered so much because of it. Painfully we have discovered the fact that we must lose valuable powers in imparting to others our knowledge of God. We are not proud that we can do this, but it gives us some satisfaction to feel that at least in part we have been fulfilling our mission. To-day we may feel additional satisfaction that, despite the process of Hellenization among so many of our brethren, it did not undermine our actual existence. The leaders who then bore the responsibilities of the Jewish nation, however, must have looked upon the spread of Hellenism in an altogether different light. It made ever greater conquests among the Jewish people, not only in the large communities of Egypt but also because of the audacity of the Tobiades, in Palestine. The slow, inevitable advance of the Greek spirit was threatening to overwhelm the people of God, to submerge them with the spirit of Alexander and Antiochus, when suddenly deliverance came—the overthrow of the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes and his Jewish military adventurers to Hellenize Judea. All at once the Jewish people saw the fearful danger; it

was a matter of life and death. With the weapon of self-sacrifice for the religion of their fathers, the Jews battled against the apparently invincible Syrians. They went to war, led by the Maccabean general. After years of struggle they were successful in achieving absolute independence, though not so much through their own powers as through the internal disintegration of the Seleucidan Empire.

From Simon the Hasmonean to the Destruction of the Second Temple (142 B.C.E.-73 C.E.)

Just as of yore, upon their first arrival in the Holy Land under the leadership of Joshua, the Jewish people again led to the task of founding a theocracy. Again it was unsuccessful, primarily because of its leaders. The descendants of the zealously religious Hasmonean leaders deteriorated into weak princes and kings. The holy office of the high priest devolved upon the political ruler. The people soon found that the nationalistic Sadducees were more dangerous to their mission than were the Hellenistic assimilationists. The ideal of these princes was not the realization of God's state, but rather the development of national power. They did not consider themselves the leaders of God's people, but the champions of national honor, in the sense that they and the other nations understood it. The abuse of this newly won independence was bound to be punished.

However, a new and invulnerable dwelling place for the soul of the people reared itself up in the Academy, long before even the slightest sign of

the political ruin of the nation was visible. The Temple, as well as the Sanhedrin that convened within its halls, had been drawn into the whirlpool of politics. The Academy gradually took the place of both these institutions in the folk-consciousness and in the historical development of the people. Here the power of kings and political ambition could find no entry. Here honest research and study held sway. The rays of the Torah streamed from the academy into the homes of the people. With the pollution of the state as a unit, the family group assumed greater significance to the people of God. Sadly they witnessed the civil wars of the last Hasmoneans; and, even more sadly, the tyranny of Herod and Archelaus, which the following period of the Roman governors brought on, apparently as a relief. The true national life, however, felt itself injured only externally; it pulsated with life in the circles of Hillel and Shammai (30 B.C.E.-10 C.E.). They were the standard-bearers of the future and the guardians of the treasures of the past. Unbowed by the despotic tyranny of the officials of Herod and of Rome, they continued their study of the law and organized and explained the oral law to their disciples so that it might not be forgotten in Israel. It is owing to their influence that the catastrophe of the war of Vespasian and of Titus, and the calamity of the destruction of the Temple, with its immense loss of life, that these scourges did not predicate the destruction of the Jewish people, but were considered by the people of that time as only a terrible chastisement, still so interpreted from a Jewish-historical viewpoint.

From the Destruction of the Temple to the Completion of the Mishna
(73-175 C.E.)

R. Jochanan ben Zakkai left Jerusalem when the city was doomed to destruction and went to Jabneh, where he built a cultural center for the Jewish people. The incursion of an evil which has been anticipated may bring great suffering, but not total annihilation. In the following decades, so difficult politically, the Jewish leaders continued with the greatest possible diligence in the task of gathering together and elucidating the oral tradition. An attempt was now made to hold fast the mass of material which had been in danger of destruction as a result of the war with Rome and the restless period that followed.

But a more implacable foe than the sword of Rome challenged the Jewish people in their very midst. The heavier the oppression of tyranny became, the readier were the minds of men to entertain the belief in Christianity, the religion which grew out of the yearnings for the Messiah. Its numbers increased steadily, especially after the unfortunate results of the great war. The destruction of the Temple, men said, was the sign of a new era. The followers of the new teaching proved such a menace because they did not entirely break away from the old law. The Jewish Christians felt more and more that they were the apostles of something new, through which the loyal devotion to the Torah might eventually be undermined. If there existed a something higher than the teachings of the Torah,

if one could attain felicity without conscientious study thereof—then why dedicate one's life to this study, and why suffer the persecutions and the tortures of the Romans for its sake? The larger the group of heathens became, who assumed many fundamental principles of Judaism through the missionary work of the Jewish Christians, the stronger grew the antagonism of the Jewish members of this new religion against their brethren who had remained loyal to tradition; and the latter had to draw the line of separation very clearly, for more dangerous to the position of Judaism than the sword and the temptation of paganism was *minuth* (heresy).

Dying and Sowing

There was something very tragic in this antagonism of Judaism against its dissenting sons, who, in connection with their new faith, were carrying to all the nations of the globe the teachings of the God of Israel, the one God, the Creator and Nourisher of all the world, the loving Father of mankind. It was, however, by the abrogation of the fundamental law of God that they soon after separated themselves entirely from their own people and achieved such tremendous activity as missionaries. In order to implant themselves in the soil of the culture of Europe and western Asia, they first had to die as members of the Jewish people. No movement on earth carries the thoughts of the Bible so far as the missionaries of Christianity; and Israel was to suffer from no persecution as from that of those who professed the faith of its daughter religion. It was due to the Tannaim, however, that

neither by the temptations nor the compulsions of the new religion, and neither during the time of its rise nor the day of its supremacy, could the Jewish religion be conquered; for it was they who, in the first two centuries of the common era, not blinded by sentimentality or the persecutions of the enemy, sat at the loom of the Halacha and wove that indestructible garment which has been Israel's protection in storm and in rain.

Ben Koziba

The final separation of Christianity from the household of its mother religion, and the complete welding together of the Jewish and pagan Christians—both were brought about by the last struggle of despair on the part of the Jewish nation against the Roman Empire. The uprising against Hadrian under the leadership of Ben Koziba (132-135), whom even R. Akiba (d. 135) regarded for a time as the Messiah, was like a cry of pain from the tortured body of the nation and a welling-up of its very soul against the merciless suppression of the holy law. The people had not yet reconciled themselves to the destruction of the Temple as a permanent condition. As the scars of the war of Titus had become less faint, the people had begun to look upon its results as a mere episode. They were still on their own soil and daily hoped for the reconstruction of their Temple. But the attitude of Hadrian soon diminished the number of pacifists, and even the few that were left were struck dumb. Had R. Akiba had numerous opponents even among his own colleagues, his position would still have been the

decisive one for many tens of thousands of Jews. But after the great early victories, the revolt collapsed, Betar was stormed, and Ben Koziba fell (135). A fearful persecution of the scholars ensued. Men like R. Akiba and R. Judah ben Baba were its victims. Their most distinguished disciples could save themselves only in flight. Even more than after the destruction of the Temple, Jewish life in Palestine seemed to be destroyed forever. Notwithstanding all this, the Holy Land had not yet ceased to be the spiritual center of the Jewish people. After the death of Hadrian, the Jewish scholars were eventually able to gather together. Thanks to R. Meir, R. Judah, R. Simon be Jochai, R. Jose, and their colleagues, it fell to the lot of Palestine once more to enjoy a blossoming of the spirit, the rich fruit of which was the monumental work, the Mishnah.

Thus the first great period of Jewish history closes. Only for too long a time does Palestine cease to be the cultural center of the Jewish people. The real exile did not begin with the fall of the Temple—the actual *galuth* begins now. The Hadrianic war finally broke the nation's fighting force against Rome; the period of the Rabbis brought the assurance of a national revival. All powers were now concentrated in an attempt to hold together the treasures of Jewish culture. Notwithstanding all the love for the Holy Land, the desire to live there cooled. Distinguished pupils of the Rabbis began to see themselves studying the Torah undisturbed in Babylonia, and they wended their way thither.

As their dearest treasure and strongest guard, the

Jewish people took with them, together with the Bible, their oral law, which was now organized and ratified in the Mishnah. For seventeen hundred years the Jews have been a phenomenon—a people without a land, without even a uniform mother tongue, who have not only continued to live, but have continued to develop, who have been open to the constant influences of the nations around them, and have influenced these nations in turn; and who, through all times, and in all lands, have remained loyal to their identity as God's people and have always borne in mind their mission to announce the supremacy of God and to teach His law to the nations of the earth.

II. The Second Period: Israel in Exile

The Period of the Supremacy of Babylonian Judaism

(175-1038 C.E.)

"Since Rab came to Babylonia, we have considered ourselves here as in Eretz-Israel." With these words the disciple of Rab, R. Huna, characterizes his teacher's significance in the transposition of Judaism to Babylonia. The year 219 C.E., when R. Abba bar Aibu (Rab) returned to his native land, was the beginning of a new era in the history of the Jews of Babylonia. Palestine ceased to be the center of Jewish spiritual life. The leadership was transmitted to Babylonian Jewry. This position remained with them for more than seven centuries. The names "Amoraim," "Saboraim," "Geonim," indicate the principal phases of this era.

The period of the Amoraim (interpreters of the Mishnah, builders of the Talmud) gave us the Talmud, that gigantic work which almost flawlessly conveys in its sections of Halacha the enormous bulk of religious law, reviews it critically, and determines by shrew observation its applicability to specific cases. In spite of the fact that an essential part of the Talmud was born on Palestinian soil, the conception of "Talmud" is always justly associated with Babylonia. Except for the short space of time under R. Jochanan, the principal part of the Talmudic period belonged to Babylonia. The genius of the codifiers of the Talmud understood how to make it the living source of Jewish culture up to the present day. Names like Rab and Mar Samuel, Abaye and Raba, Rabina and Rab Aschi, are to us not memories out of ancient times, but, through their constant intercourse with the investigations and teachings of these men, they appear to modern scholars as contemporaries. The study of the Talmud forms the unifying bond of the generations of the Jewish Diaspora. The all-powerful position of religion in the life of the Jewish people tended to identify criminal and civil law with religious law. In the Agada, with which the strictly legal portions are saturated and surrounded, the Talmud displays an abundance of the philosophical aphorisms of the Jew, as well as of observations in natural science and in history. We find in the Talmud not only the results of scholarly investigations, but their germination and their growth during a period of three hundred years.

The Law of the State

The Talmud also laid down the rule of conduct which the Jews were to follow in their relationship with the nations among whom they dwelt, through the ordinance of Mar Samuel in the first half of the third century: "Dina de malchuta dina." This acceptance of the law of the land, as the civil law which they too were to obey, gave the Jews scattered over the world a basis on which to build their legal relationship with the nations. Only thus were they enabled to adapt themselves to the laws of the land, without constant pangs of conscience. It was only thus that the Jew could meet the attacks of his numerous enemies. The Jewish leaders saw that the people of God were fated to live, scattered all over the world, and therefore they sought means whereby they could live peacefully among the nations without sacrificing their identity. The sages of the Talmud provided these fundamental principles of conduct.

Notwithstanding the fact that the political conditions of the Jews in Babylonia were markedly more favorable than those of their brethren in the west, they were not by an means free from persecution. Yet in spite of such disturbances, the enormous task of compiling the Talmud was completed in the second half of the fifth century, and the devoted labor of the Saboraim (Ponderers) through this period of trial, when they were oppressed by the Persian kings and governors, made it possible for them to give us the final text of the Talmud,

which with few changes is the standard text adopted by the entire Jewish race.

Sura and Pumbeditha

The intellectual activity of the Babylonian Jews was not exhausted with the completion of the Talmud. For many centuries both the academies, Pumbeditha and Sura, were the centers of Jewish culture, not only of the East but of all Jewry. Considering the reputation they had in all the countries of the Diaspora, the Geonim (heads of the Jewish academies), surrounded by the scholars of both academies, were the established authorities of Judaism. When Islam conquered the Orient in the middle of the seventh century, it recognized the Jewish religion and gave the Jews all the rights that they had enjoyed under the most tolerant Persian rulers. Besides intensive Talmudical study, the Jews now began to interest themselves in Bible exegesis and in grammar. These studies were furthered by the struggle against the Karaites, the followers of Anan ben David (d. 800). The latter struck out with great force against the hard-and-fast oral tradition of the Talmud and sought to explain the Bible by independent interpretation. The counterpart of the conflict between the Karaites and the Rabbanites (the followers of rabbinic Judaism) was the struggle between the Schi'ites, the enemies of the oral tradition of Islam, and the Sunnites, its followers. Judaism and Mohammedanism were no doubt reciprocally influenced. Jews took part in the active give-and-take of the intellectual enterprises

in the Arabian universities. The fact that Judaism had the power to shield itself from Karaism in spite of all this outside activity, and eventually to wipe out its followers from among the Jewish people, is a proof of the fact that Jewish tradition was so securely implanted within the nation by the Talmud that attacks neither from within nor without its walls could do it any lasting harm. Pumbeditha and Sura were the fortresses of Talmudic study, and their ranks of scholars were kept full for centuries. Up to the end of the ninth century it was understood that the Geonim were to be selected from the academies, and that they were chosen not only for their keen minds but for their all-embracing knowledge of Talmud.

Saadya

A new phase, in more than one sense, began in Jewish history with the appointment of Saadya ben Josef of Fayum (892-942) to the Geonate of Sura. The fact that an Egyptian scholar was made Gaon suggested that the supremacy of Babylonia was ended. Even more significant was the fact that Saadya's greatness did not lie merely in his knowledge of Talmud, but also in his independent Biblical and philosophical studies. That such a man could have been chosen, and that his appointment (in spite of all the political conflicts with the Exilarch, head of Jews in Babylonia) bestowed another glorious period upon the academy that Rab had founded, even though it was the last, was an indication of the importance which independent Biblical research had achieved, and, moreover, of how much greater regard Jewish Babylonia had acquired for philosophy.

Jewish scholars now debated with non-Jews on philosophical questions, as they had once done in Alexandria. Yet while the Alexandrian Jews had suffered for their interest in philosophy by losing their Jewish identity, the Jews of Bagdad on the whole lost nothing of their faith through their association with non-Jews. The centuries of Talmudic schooling gave them an altogether different grasp of the situation than Philo had had. The free-thinking Arabic philosopher himself was very much more orientated religiously than the Hellenists of Egypt. Through his *Emunoth V'Deoth* Saadya became the philosophical leader of his contemporaries and of many generations after him. Not so much because of his actual works as because of his trend of mind, he has been to us the prototype of the Talmudically educated, sincerely believing philosopher, who did not seek to compromise but rather to synthesize faith and knowledge. Saadya cannot be considered as an isolated Jewish scholar, fighting individually in the arena of general learning, for in him Judaism itself takes its stand in the conflict, employing him as its most glorious warrior. When Saadya wrote his work in the Arabic language, it became very evident how closely the Jewish-Babylonian intellectual world had allied itself with Arabic culture.

Since the spiritual supremacy of Babylonia has been declining, and Spain, among all the lands under the sway of Islam, was gradually taking its place, it was well that the philosophical studies of the Jews began on old Talmudical ground, represented by Saadya, and that they did not first find their spokesman in the new land. Thus, since these philo-

sophical studies were pursued in the closest relationship with Talmudical knowledge and feeling, they could not be considered as the expression of a weak, new-fangled Jewish idealism; and the scientific Biblical research of the Jewish grammarians and exegetes of Arabic cultural circles took for granted their close relationship to Jewish tradition. The seven centuries of cultural supremacy in Babylonia were a good school for the Jewish people. Saturated with Talmudic thought and feeling, they could now, without danger, take their part in the spiritual life of the nations, to be influenced by it themselves and in return to show the way toward God in the realm of the mind as well as in ethics.

The Period of the Spanish and the Northern French-German Cultural Centers (139 B.C.E.-1492 C.E.)

At about the middle of the tenth century, Babylonia's supremacy in Jewish cultural life ceased. Now began a gradual spiritual decline because of the lack of a strong center. True, the Geonate of Pumbeditha still continued to exist for another century, but in spite of its brilliant leaders, Rabbi Sherira and Rabbi Hai (fl. 968-1038), it ceased to hold its position of leadership of all Jewry. An independent Jewish cultural life sprung up in Europe. Two great cultural groups began to take definite shape—the Sephardic and the Ashkenazic. Their difference lay essentially in the difference between the Jews of the Mediterranean lands, among which Spain soon took the lead, and the Jews of the rest of Europe, the leadership of which even-

tually passed from northern France to southern and central Germany. For a long time southern France played the important rôle of arbitrator between the two groups. The Jews of the Byzantine Empire were of lesser general importance.

The political victory of Christianity gradually robbed the Jews of their equal rights of citizenship in the Roman Empire, which they had enjoyed since the reign of the Emperor Caracalla and of which finally they were entirely deprived by the laws of Justinian (527-565). By their incorporation into the Codex Juris Romani, these anti-Jewish laws became the legal precedent for the abuse of the Jews by the Christians in most of the Christian countries until well into the nineteenth century.

Under the rule of priests and kings, whose lust for persecution was fanatical, the Jews of the Spanish Visigoth Kingdom suffered most. The victory of the Arabs at Xerez (711) brought the Jews relief from their oppressors. The Jews soon took active part in the development of Hispano-Arabic culture. Their favorable political and economic position as intermediaries between the vanquished Visigoths and their Arabic conquerors helped them in every way. The glory of Jewish-Spanish culture began in the second half of the tenth century, under the influence of the versatile, highly educated Jewish statesman, Chasdai ibn Shaprut (fl. 961-976), and reached its highest point of development in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. A representative figure of that glorious epoch when Jewish and Arabic scholars were numerous, and when statesmen and generals sat down between battles to write poems and

Talmudical treatises of lasting value was Samuel Hanagid (1027-1055). Imbued with the Jewish spirit and nurtured by the wisdom of Jewish, Greek, and Arabic thinkers, divinely inspired poets and philosophers like Salomon ibn Gabirol (d. 1070) and Judah Halevi (1085-1140) created works of permanent value for the world. It was the springtime of new life in all branches of learning. Grammar, exegesis, mathematics, and astronomy were pursued with a zest hitherto unknown. Names like Menachem ben Saruk and Chayuj, Jonah ibn Janach and Abraham ibn Ezra, are proof of the scientific spirit which possessed the Spanish Jews of that period, and which has rendered the Biblical research of that time of such great importance to us even to-day.

The Halachah (Religious Law)

Unmistakably, however, it was the Talmud and the Halachah which were the basis of all of this Jewish culture. This Jewish learning which manifested itself in so many fields was indissolubly united with the study and the tradition of Sura and Pumbeditha. The towering figure of R. Isaak Alfasi (1012-1103) rises before us, even above the titans of his time. Because of his sovereign knowledge of the Talmud in all its breadth and depth, he was able to form for the Jewish people the Halachic extract of the "sea of the Talmud," which work has become one of the most vital factors in Halachic study. Notwithstanding the fact that he secluded himself and his knowledge in his home in Morocco until he was an old man, he still must be considered a member of the Spanish-Jewish group, because of the univer-

sal recognition and honor bestowed upon him when he arrived in Spain, and because of the influence he exerted over his disciples.

The intellectual power of Spanish Judaism of this period is epitomized in the personality of R. Moses ben Maimum, "Rambam" (1135-1204). Prepared as he was with a thorough knowledge of Talmudical tradition and the Arabic culture of his time, and above all, blessed with the keenness of mind with which only the most select of humanity are endowed, he became the greatest codifier of the Halachah, that gigantic, formless mass which he was able to shape into an organic whole, penetrating into its finest detail and yet remaining aware and appreciative of the unity of the whole. Since the Bible and the Talmud, Jewish literature had not acquired a work like Maimonides' *Mishne Torah.* And never had a Jewish thinker defined the boundaries between religion and philosophy in so systematic a manner as the author of *The Guide to the Perplexed.* He became the guide in philosophical thought to thousands of religious people of all lands. Not always, however, did he banish perplexity. Many readers became indignant rather than appeased; at times the number of opponents of the *More* (*The Guide to the Perplexed,* Maimonides' great philosophical work) was greater than the number of its friends. And not all of these latter followed their leader unconditionally. But in spite and because of these conflicts which arose in all parts of the Jewish world over the *More,* it has remained the most valuable incentive for discussing the problem of the relation of the Jews to God's law and that of the religious

man to his God. Maimonides looms far above the level of the Jewish people and beyond the decades of his own life as the guide to innumerable thinkers of all nations (if often indirectly) toward a philosophy that remains faithful to religion.

France and Germany

While Spanish Judaism very obviously owed much to its fortunate political position, the most active period of cultural life for the Jews in northern France and Germany proceeded under the stress of brutal persecution. It is understood that owing to this fact, as well as to the cultural stagnation of the Christian nations of the Middle Ages, the Jews of northern France and Germany were influenced very little by their neighbors, and therefore concentrated their efforts on the study of the Bible and Talmud to a far greater extent than did their brethren of Spain. Tortured by ruthless persecutors, threatened and insulted by crazed mobs, the German and French Jews of the Middle Ages found it a spiritual and intellectual refuge to lock themselves up lovingly within the treasure house of the Bible and the Talmud. They enriched these treasures greatly through their incomparable devotion to study. What thousands of scholars here accomplished through the centuries of persecution can hardly be paralleled in the history of the world's literature. They explored the whole breadth of the Talmud; they descended into the deepest depths of the caverns of the soul of Jewish tradition, and brought the most beautiful teachings of God's law into the light.

Rabbi Gershom

At the same time that, under the happier skies of Spain, Samuel Hanagid became the pride of his people, R. Gershom, "Meor Hagolah" (d. 1040), the beacon light of the Exile, was the support and comforter of his persecuted brethren on the Rhine, and the pathfinder for his disciples on the overgrown trails of the Talmud. The academies of northern France and Germany were filled with thousands of scholars and students. "As the sun sank in far away Babylonia, it shone forth in the West."

Rashi

At the time when Pumbeditha, the capital of Jewish culture, was sinking into the dust, R. Salomon ben Isaac, "Rashi" (1040-1105), was born in the Champagne. He became the commentator of Torah and Talmud for all time and for every land. United with his masterly pedagogic art were his genial keen-mindedness and his intuitive understanding. Thus he lived, teaching his people, leading the learned, forming rules, and explaining the holy scriptures. The generations following Rashi were entirely under his influence. His commentaries were the foundation for the investigations of the Tosafists. In their critical remarks they illuminated the words of the master, examined the relationship between various portions of the Talmud, and clarified arguments by citing the results of Talmudical discussion on the Halachah. Besides working with the Talmud, they also occupied themselves with Bible exegesis.

The influence of the Spanish scholars in both these fields, however, became more and more evident. This fact has been pointed out to prove how little the fearful experiences of the Crusades were reflected in the learned works of the time. Occasional mention is made, indeed, of those inhuman persecutions and of the general wretchedness, but they touch very little upon the actual conditions. The Jewish heroes of the spirit understood how to be more powerful than their fate by devotion to God and by zealous study. The German Jews of the Middle Ages, tortured by narrow-minded, ignorant princes and peoples, knew how to suffer and to bear without wrecking their souls. They turned mournfully and beseechingly toward their God, with the most touching prayers; misery twice as great as that which they had suffered could not tear them from their faith. Thousands of them fell under the hands of their murderers because they would not lie even with their lips. They were the witnesses of God's sovereignty, as they announced innumerable times in their death groans. They were the proof in those dark ages that the spirit is stronger than physical force. That the Jewish people continued to exist in Christian Europe at a time when they were banished from whole countries and driven from city to city even in the lands where they were tolerated; that, hated and ridiculed, killed by the thousands and maltreated and exploited everywhere, they lived on in despite, steadfast in their faith in one God, surviving their very oppressors—this is one of the greatest miracles in the world's history. Because of the dire want and the ever-increasing oppression

during the next centuries, the literary production of the German Jews was lessened for a time but their ethical greatness remains unsurpassed. Ashkenazic Jewry of to-day owes its existence to this heroic loyalty.

The Badge of Shame

For a long time the Jews of Spain enjoyed a happier fate than their brethren in Christian Europe. True enough, they had unhappy days also under Mohammedan rule. Even during the eleventh and twelfth centuries they were not always entirely safe from mishap. Maimonides himself had to leave his home because of the persecutions of the fanatical Almohades. The Jews of Spain sought temporary protection from the persecution of individual Islamic princes in the new Christian states of the peninsula, where at first they enjoyed great freedom.

The beginning of the thirteenth century marked for the Jews of Spain, as well as for the Jews of all Christian Europe, the beginning of that terrible period when an attempt was made not only systematically to deprive them of their rights, but also to rob them of human respect in the eyes of the world. The maliciously planned, carefully ordered "Jew-edicts" of the Lateran Council of 1215 were worse by far than even the spontaneous outbreaks of mob hatred and coarse fanaticism, to which thousands of Jewish lives had often been sacrificed. The most pernicious ruling was that every Jew had to wear a badge on his garment to mark him off from the rest of his fellow men. The purpose of this ruling—and it was realized only too often—was to make the Jew conspicuous in the eyes of the people,

and to arouse in the populace all the evil instincts of hate and loathing. For more than five hundred years this yellow badge, the mark of shame, wrought its infamy in Christian Europe. It is remarkable that it did not take the Jew's own self-respect from him; and it proves the inner worth of the nation, in that, despite the mockery of mobs and rulers, each individual remained a prince within the circle of his own family and his community.

The constant advance of the Christians upon the Pyrenean peninsula meant that the Jews must eventually lose their favorable political position. Kings who were kindlier-minded were forced by the hate of the Popes, and especially by the lust for persecution of the Dominicans, to act severely against the Jews. Renegades, too, allied themselves with the enemy, and sought only to convert their erstwhile coreligionists to Christianity. Through the Christian princes, they forced the Jews into religious disputations. When such scholars as R. Moses ben Nachman (1194-1270) were actually successful in defeating their opponents, in spite of the aid received by the latter from state and church, it availed the Jews nought, for it only increased the hatred of their disappointed enemies.

Maimonists and Anti-Maimonists

After Maimonides, the cultural life of the Jews, especially in Spain and the Provence, was largely occupied with a conflict regarding his writings. In spite of the fact that the contest was intelligent and the motives sincere, so much disputation was bound eventually to result in animosity. The interference

of the Court of Inquisition of the Dominicans indicated plainly enough the possible dangers of such a struggle. But the combat between the followers and the foes of philosophical study raged on. When, in their campaign against the Jews, the philosophically educated Dominicans made their greatest efforts to remove the ground of the argument to a spiritual plane, philosophy could only too easily have been the bridge which would have led the Jews to Christian Scholasticism. But the Jew could not be tempted; he suffered more than ever because of his unquestioning and devoted faith in God. Both rationalistic investigations and scholastic philosophy of the immature could equally have undermined the fundamentals of faith. On the other hand, it was difficult to shun philosophy and to give up all its worthy ideas. R. Salomon ben Adret (d. 1310) in 1305 sought, for the next half-century, to reconcile both viewpoints by forbidding the reading of philosophical works until one was past the age of twenty-five. It was a drastic measure for the Talmudical authorities of Spain, justified only by the conditions of the times. It was a magnificent act of self-denial for the sake of self-preservation.

Kabbalah

On the other hand, the spread of the Kabbalah did much to suppress rationalistic philosophy. The study of the Kabbalah was given great impetus by the publication of the *Zohar* (1300) by R. Moses de Leon. As has often been the case in the cultural life of other peoples, so it was with the Jews—a reaction against rationalism set in, in the form of a

mystical yearning for knowledge of the very essence of God. Both claimed their rights: the emotion so often suppressed by intellect; and the heated striving to approach so closely the quintessence of all being that cool reason could not comprehend it and therefore sought to deny it. Thus, even among the Spanish Jews, philosophy began more and more to lose its important position, and the essential difference between Spanish and Central European culture became less and less marked. The emigration of R. Asher ben Jechiel (fl. 1306-1327), the "Rosh" of Germany, to Spain was of the greatest importance to this amalgamation. He and his son, R. Jakob, the author of *Arba Turim*, established the union between the detailed, critical research of the Tosafists and the systematic methods of the Spanish scholars in the fields of Talmud and Halachah.

As for the political fate of the Jews of Christian Spain—with the exception of a few transitory peaceful interludes—it began to resemble that of their brethren in Western and Central Europe. Yet, considering it from a social standpoint, it was much more difficult for the Sephardim, who were accustomed to better times. The distinctive tragedy in the history of the Spanish Jews lay in the desperate struggle of the Marranos, who secretly remained true to the faith of their fathers and who endeavored to cultivate it in the hearts of their children. The Talmudical works of R. Nissim Gerundi, "Ran" (d. after 1380), and the philosophical writing of men like Chisdai Crescas (1340-1410) and Joseph Albo (d. 1444), show how intensive the cultural life of

the Spanish Jews was in the latter half of the fourteenth and in the fifteenth centuries.

Money-lending

Among the many laws expressly designed against the Ashkenazic Jews, the most tragic were those which forbade them to own land and those which set limitations on their activity in trade and the handicrafts. Thus the Jew was driven to money-lending and to the usury that went with it. The princes of both church and state treated him most abusively, and by granting him certain so-called special privileges on the payment of unbearably heavy taxes they forced him to draw usurious interest from the public in order to satiate their avarice. Hence, social hatred on the part of the public suffering under extortionate usury was combined with religious fanaticism against the Jew, for the people did not understand who the real oppressors were. The political history of the Jews of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries is one long tale of martyrdom, only rarely interrupted by better times. Driven out of England in 1290, decimated by the dreadful slaughters at the time of the Black Death in Germany and France (1348), killed by the thousands in Spain after blood-days of Seville (1391), then finally driven out of France in 1394, tortured and massacred everywhere in Germany—the Jew suffered the very literal fulfillment of the terrible curse: "Your life shall seem to you like a thing in a dream. You will gasp for breath both day and night and not believe in your own existence."

The Horrors of "Galuth"

The German Jews of the fifteenth century were accustomed to oppression and accepted each new atrocity with resignation, only praying inwardly to God for a speedy release. In Spain, however, they could not yet believe that the good days were gone forever. Although continually threatened by persecution and death, some Jews and many Marranos found it possible to acquire wealth and to occupy high positions of state, which only brought them and their brethren new dangers through greedy and fanatic priests and an incensed mob. The year 1481 brought with it the horror of the first auto-da-fe. After the furies of Torquemada and his henchmen, the concluding act of the tragedy lost its terrors. Thirty thousand Jews were forced to leave Spain on the ninth of *Ab* in the year 1492, most of them to meet a wretched fate. Each one could have saved himself with one word of lying; yet he remained true to his God. Suffering the most horrible misery, these thirty thousand wanderers stood as a flaming example of *Kiddush Hashem* (the hallowing of God's name). Like their spiritual leader, Don Isaac Abarbanel (1437-1509), the Bible exegete and statesman, they seemed more exalted in misfortune than in peace. Having been given the choice either to acquire riches and honors by denying their faith, or to give up everything which they possessed socially and economically, they preferred to grasp the wanderer's staff and face a dismal future. The people of God knew well how to hallow His name, in that they voluntarily denied themselves the things of

greatest value to other nations when their honor was at stake. Thirty thousand Jews departed from Spain as messengers of God's sovereignty on earth. The fanatical despotism of princes could bring misfortune to Israel and destroy the happiness and the lives of thousands, but the inexorable faith in God, the Creator of the world and the Guide of human history, was stronger still.

From the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain to the French Revolution (1492-1789)

The period which is considered "modern" in the history of Western Europe began for the Jews with the dispersion of their Spanish brethren all over the continent. The only land that gave promise of a permanent refuge was Turkey. The humane conduct of Sultan Bajazet II was prompted by an equal admixture of common sense and sympathy. The highly cultured immigrants, who were followed steadily by new groups of Marranos, brought to their new home a growth in trade and industry, and also provided men who were valuable to the Sultan's court. Soon Constantinople contained thirty thousand Jews, while Saloniki blossomed forth surprisingly and became practically a Spanish-Jewish city. The newcomers, whose descendants still used the Spanish language, stamped their own individuality on most of the communities within which they settled. After the comparative barrenness of almost a thousand years, a new consciously Jewish community began to develop in Palestine. R. Joseph Caro (b. 1488) transferred the cultural center of the Holy Land to Safed. He perpetuated the whole

of the Spanish Talmud-Halachah science in his great commentaries on the *Turim* of R. Jacob ben Ascher and the *Mishne Torah* of R. Moses ben Maimun, but most of all in his *Shulchan Aruch,* the authoritative compendium of all the Halachah of that period. The fact that so many brilliant scholars, learned in the Torah, had congregated in one place inspired R. Jacob Berab's attempt to reëstablish the Sanhedrin. But the plan failed because of the opposition of many scholars, especially of R. Levi ben Chabib. Through R. Isaac Luria, the "Ari" (b. 1532), and his disciples, Safed became for several decades the center for the study of Kabbalah as well. Since the end of the fifteenth century the stream of Jews returning to Palestine has never ceased to flow, although the strength of the current has continually changed with the changing times. Just as the persecutions in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century gave the first impetus to the present wave of Jews returning to the land of their fathers, so the expulsion from Spain was the real cause of the European Jews again settling in Eretz-Israel. It seemed that what the enemies of the Jews had intended for their ruin gave assistance to the more kindly plans of fate.

Lands of Refuge

Serving as a refuge to Sephardic Jews in a much more comprehensive sense than did the Turkish Empire, Poland came to the aid of the German Jews. True, the Jews were never actually driven out of Germany. The fact that there was no strong central state in either Germany or Italy protected the Jews from such a tragedy. When one petty prince

showed his hatred too strongly there was always his neighbor to flee to for protection; the narrow-mindedness of one city might even begrudge the Jews the air that they breathed, but there was always another to open wide its doors to receive them. Hardly ever, though, was this hospitality prompted by sympathy; wheresoever these fugitives were granted shelter, as a rule it was done after well-calculated plans to extort great sums of money from them for dwelling privileges and otherwise to tax them heavily. Following the persecutions of the Crusades and after, the number of Jews in Poland continued to increase. This influx became even greater after the terrible slaughter of the Jews at the time of the Black Death. It was indeed fortunate that a man like Kasimir the Great was then on the throne of Poland, for he not only offered a welcome to the wanderers, but also established their legal position, not indeed on the same level with the Catholic Christians, but on a par with that of the rest of the non-Catholic people in his empire. That the Jews were granted a competency at court proved very valuable to them and protected them from the arbitrary power of the nobility. The fact that there was no Polish bourgeois class accounted for the not unfavorable political and economic condition of the Jew until well into the seventeenth century. The Jew formed the necessary link between the noble and the peasant.

John Reuchlin

In contrast to the condition of the Jews in Poland, their brethren in Germany were treated wretchedly, and their very life and limb were in danger. In

1510 thirty-eight Jews were burnt at the stake in Berlin on the false charge of having desecrated the Host. Only gradually did the influence of humanism, especially through the efforts of John Reuchlin (1455-1522), during the Reformation, make itself felt in favor of the Jews. When Luther still continued to treat the Jews less ferociously, after his hopes to convert all of them en masse had been shattered, it was evident that the dissension in Germany would eventually bring with it a certain amount of toleration. Josel von Rosheim, self-sacrificing and shrewd, knew well how to entreat for his brethren at the court of the kaiser and princes, among whom were both Catholics and Protestants.

In Poland

The favorable situation of the Jews in Poland gave rise to a lively spiritual and social life, which bade fair to become the mainstay of the Jews in the other European countries. Because of the autonomy that Polish Jewry enjoyed, there developed not only prosperous individual communities, but also a strong, powerful organization of the rabbis of the Polish Empire, the Four Lands Synod, which became the authoritative body in settling all questions for the Jews of Poland. Since the time of the Exilarchs and the Geonim of Babylonia, the Jews of no land of the Diaspora had enjoyed such well-organized self-government. Just as of yore in the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates, the study of the Torah again attracted the interest of the whole people. There now arose the Koryphae of the Talmud and the Halachah, who occupied themselves with amaz-

ing zeal in Talmudical and Halachic investigations. By their keen dialectic schooling, they created and developed that thorough and brilliant method of study used up to the present day in the Talmudical academies. Of course, the method of *Pilpul* had its dangers, both when it was an end in itself and when it served only as a means of appearing brilliant. But it has proved to be of invaluable aid to the thorough study of the Talmud when combined with an unconditional striving toward truth and a clear understanding of essentials. R. Moses ben Isserles, "Remo," famous for his glosses on the *Shulchan Aruch,* the authoritative code for all Jewry, was one of the distinguished men of the sixteenth century, as were also his contemporaries, R. Josef Caro, the author of the *Shulchan Aruch* (1488-1575), and R. Solomon Luria, the "Maharshal," equally renowned as Halachist and as Talmudical scholar. Unlike the cultural life in the golden age in Spain, the cultural life of the Jews in Poland limited itself almost exclusively to the Talmud. There were exceptions, however, as we find with R. Moses Isserles, who interested himself in history, astronomy, and philosophy as well. But the limits within which the Polish Jews bound themselves gave them an intensity of Jewish consciousness that was able to live through, and was even heightened by, the horrendous Cossack persecutions of 1648. This dread catastrophe is said to have claimed 600,000 victims within the space of one decade. A flood of Polish Jewish fugitives poured into every land, but still Poland and Lithuania remained the greatest Jewish centers. The material prosperity of the Jews

in those lands was gone, but even in the straits through which they struggled the study of the Talmud continued.

No definite improvement in the social position of the Jew seemed to be discernible in Germany during the seventeenth century, yet the atrocities gradually decreased. Two years after the Jews had been driven out of Frankfurt in 1614 they were summoned back again with much ceremony, which included the execution of their enemies. The Jews, too, suffered during the Thirty Years' War, but no distinct persecutions seem to have occurred. Personalities like R. Yomtob Lipmann Heller and R. Meir Schiff show that Germany, too, produced distinguished Talmudical scholars in the seventeenth century.

A New Era

The first forecastings of a new era appeared to the Jews in Holland. The Dutch people, who had themselves been freed from the Spanish Inquisition after a hard struggle, gave shelter to the Marranos who had fled from Spain and Portugal at the end of the sixteenth century, and a Jewish community began to flourish in that land. In addition to the Sephardic immigrants, victims of the Thirty Years' War and the Cossack massacres came out of Germany and Poland. The community of Amsterdam soon became one of the most important in all Jewry. Here there developed a cultural life in which the Bible, the Talmud, and philosophy were actively pursued. The Jews of Amsterdam, however, were not spared some severe shocks. The life of the Marrano, for centuries under the influence of Catholic

education, could not easily be transformed. Above all, the certainty of faith was missing, to as great an extent as the Jews in the other lands possessed it. Thus, a man like Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), with his brilliant talents and lofty ethics, could become so estranged from Judaism that the College of Rabbis found it necessary to excommunicate him and to dismiss him bodily from the midst of his coreligionists, as he himself had already departed spiritually. A feeling of pain comes over us when we think of the loss of one of its greatest spirits to the Jewish people, one who has given so much to the world in his unique philosophical works. But it had to be so. After Baruch Spinoza had forsaken the traditions and the beliefs of Judaism, the breach had to be made public in order that the whole of Jewry might be protected. Another member of the community of Amsterdam enlisted all of his broad knowledge of Talmud, philosophy, and philology in the service of his people. It was he, Menasseh ben Israel (1604-1657), who through his brilliant literary and oratorical efforts prepared the way for the return of the Jews to England.

Sabbatai Zevi

A wild confusion of mystical ardor possessed a large portion of the Jews in the latter half of the seventeenth century. The sufferings brought about by the atrocities of the Cossacks were excellent soil in which to plant the soaring hopes of a glorious and immediate release—and thus arose Sabbatai Zevi (1626-1676), the false Messiah of Smyrna, and his false prophets. Even distinguished scholars

allowed themselves temporarily to be misled. When Sabbatai, however, accepted Mohammedanism in order to save his life from the threats of the sultan, the fraud was generally recognized. But the effects were felt by the people for a long time.

Hassidism

It was the fear of another such Sabbatianic fraud that caused the powerful struggle on the part of so many rabbis against Hassidism, which came almost a hundred years later. The concentration of all spiritual energy on the intensive study of Talmud, and its powerful position in the education of the youth, could easily cause an overestimation of the intellect and an underestimation of the importance of the emotions in the life of man. Thus keenness of mind might be prized more highly than moral integrity. It was mediocrity that owed its so-called success to one-sided schooling rather than to native ability; it was inclined to consider the spiritual power sacrificed to this one-sidedness as unessential, and sought to resist by contempt that which was not purely intellectual. But the emotional phase of life cannot be suppressed for any length of time; and in its first struggles of self-assertion it is apt to underestimate the intellectual phase. The rise of Hassidism might be considered such a gigantic upheaval of the slumbering powers in the depths of the Jewish soul against the real or seeming tyranny of the intellect. R. Israel Baal Shem Tob (b. 1700) (Bescht) preached with glowing enthusiasm the value of prayer and the mystical effacement of oneself in the image of God. His advent came as an

emancipation to those who could not find complete satisfaction in mere intensive study. The swift and lasting victory of Hassidism has proven that its original power was rooted in the Jewish race consciousness. Danger would have been inevitable had this movement swung itself entirely away from Talmud and Halacha. It was owing to the sharp criticism which Talmudism directed toward Hassidism that the latter did not do this, but avoided all uncontrolled mysticism and recognized the essential discipline in all things; Hassidism, in fact, became the guardian of traditional law. The struggle conducted by R. Elijah of Wilna (1720-1797) may give some idea of the dangers that youthful Hassidism held within itself. The appearance of this man at this particular time was a godsend to the Jews. A man of almost superhuman clarity of thought, of all-embracing knowledge, as well as of the loftiest moral character; a man who embodied within himself the sanctity of learning and the living character of God's teachings—in such a man all contradictions between intellect and emotion ceased. His study was ethics; his prayer was purest thought. Not only by his literary works, but more by his personality and by his disciples, did the "Wilnaer Gaon" become the pillar of that exalted type of Talmudical study which is still pursued by its exponents in the academies of Lithuania. It was he, equally great in destructive and constructive criticism, that led Hassidism back to Talmudic Judaism. R. Elijah is considered the representative of Jewish knowledge in all fields of thorough research, ennobled by the most exalted, glorious morality.

The Jews in Germany (18th Century)

For the Jews of Germany, the eighteenth century formed the transition to the modern period. Under the influence of such men as Professor Christian Wolff and the historian Jacques Basagne, the hostile attitude of the cultured Christians toward the Jews gradually changed; this resulted in an improvement of their social and political condition. An indication of the change is seen in the confiscation of the slanderous pamphlet by Eisenmenger, called *Entdecktes Judentum.* In spite of the disapproval of the Prussian king, the German kaiser did not reinstate the slanderous document. The governments, too, began to realize that the Jews were no longer the objects of oppression and scorn. Neither could the signs of a mutual rapprochement between the Jews and the general cultural world be denied. Judaism stood on the threshold of a new development and in a few decades the subject of a synthesis between Judaism and general European culture became a burning question. How was it to be answered? Would Alexandria or Bagdad or Cordova be set up as an example? The inner union between the teachings and the laws of the Torah was not looser than it once had been in Babylonia and in Spain; and there was also no dearth of spiritual leaders. But the unhappy conflict between R. Jonathan Eibeschütz and R. Jakob Emden, which involved practically all of rabbinical Germany, arose like an evil portent. The decree of excommunication, which was so often hurled upon the most distinguished personalities of this time, necessarily

resulted in the undermining of the people's respect toward the rabbis. At a time when European Jewry had to be led with counsel and forethought into the modern era; at a time when mutual confidence among the leaders and the confidence of the people in their leaders were absolutely necessary that the development of Judaism might continue successfully —it was then that the men at the helm failed, not because of lack of ability, but because of lack of authority. Thus, without trust in their leaders, the Jews of Germany turned their faces toward the Era of Enlightenment.

Mendelssohn

An added misfortune in this state of affairs was the fact that the man they recognized as their guide to world culture, notwithstanding his high morality and his abundance of learning, did not stand out as a personality glowing with the knowledge and love of Torah. Not a Saadya and not a Moses ben Maimun, but a Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) was the German pioneer of Judaism into the culture of the time, or, more exactly, the pioneer of the culture of the time into Judaism. Saadya's Arabic translation of the Bible is to-day still regarded by the Yemenite Jews as equally authoritative with the commentaries of Rashi to the Ashkenazim, but Mendelssohn's German translation brought a storm of indignation from within rabbinical circles. It was understood well enough that this translation served rather to lead Jewish readers into the realms of German literature than to spread the knowledge of the Bible; and it lacked, above all, a strong com-

prehension of Jewish tradition. How different might have been the character of the work and its effect if the German translation of the Bible had been entrusted to the associated efforts of the great rabbinical scholars of the time, and had thus assured the historical continuity of the tradition! That this had not occurred, and perhaps could not occur, was one of the prime causes of the cultural conflict that the Jews underwent at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The entrance of German Jews into the realms of the world culture lacked the proper guidance. Undoubtedly the noblest motives in the interest of his brethren reigned in the heart of Mendelssohn. Much is due him for his successful efforts to improve the social and political position of his brethren. But it was his sad fate, and that of Judaism as a whole, that even against his will he was given the rôle of a leader, for which he was not qualified. He lacked that deeper historical comprehension and that inner kinship with the being and essence of the Jewish people. Hence his disciples and comrades could achieve their entrance into world culture most readily by sacrificing their Judaism.

The time now came when the Jewish people in all the lands of the Diaspora gradually stepped out of their isolation of centuries. Now it was not a matter that involved only a part of the people but, in the space of a little less than a century, the problem of Jewish self-assertion within another cultural world became universal, both geographically and socially. While persecuted and cut off from the rest of society, Israel had remained true to God and

His teachings. A new, greater task was now set before them: they were to live amongst the nations, giving and receiving and thus playing an active part in the culture of the world, and yet they were to assert themselves as God's people. In the face of the continual shifting of political and ethical standards, they were to preach the kingdom of God on earth.

From the French Revolution to the World War (1791-1914)

On September 27, 1791, the French National Assembly granted unconditional rights of citizenship to the Jews of France. Within the space of a few generations the direct or indirect influence of the French Revolution upon the whole of Europe resulted in the granting of equal civic rights to the Jews of Western and Central Europe, although the actual practice in many lands still leaves much to be desired. The precedent of withholding civil rights from the Jew was at last broken, after a thousand years. The Jew now became a full-fledged citizen. A new era of Jewish history was inaugurated.

As fortunate as this turn of events was for the individual Jew from the standpoint of political and social position, just so dangerous did it prove for the Jews as a whole and as individuals from the viewpoint of religion. The many centuries of subjection had exercised a pressure from without that formed a united whole within, and only a relatively few weak characters had attempted to throw off this pressure by denying their faith. Now the existence of Judaism was threatened by a new and more

dangerous foe: assimilation. In Western and Central Europe, the feeling of unity became even weaker. On the one hand there arose among the Jews the geographical and political boundaries of the different countries; on the other hand each person began more and more to assert his rights as an individual who was alone to decide whether he was to continue as a Jew, or go forth and lose his identity in the non-Jewish world.

"Aufklaerung"

The Mendelssohnian period had loosened the foundations in Germany. The leadership of the Jewish communities gradually slipped out of the hands of the rabbis and was transferred to a small class of Jews of high social and financial position. The majority of these were under the influence of the Enlightenment (*Aufklaerung*). Their ideal was the nearest possible imitation of what was being done in Christian society, whereby they hoped to attain equal civil rights. The retreat of positive religious and national feeling to make way for a more universal feeling for mankind as a whole—which was the outstanding characteristic of the past century—caused the Jews to lose themselves in the whole, forgetting to retain that amount of distinction which could leave them the mission of the religion of their fathers.

Conditions changed once more, however, when the ideals of German nationalism and Christianity were again emphasized after the Wars of Liberation, and the partly won equality of civil rights for the Jews was almost entirely lost. Now the Jews had to

show their true color. Did they wish to live as Jews and hope for the best, or would they submit to baptism, and be submerged into Christian-German culture? There were only too many who could not resist the temptation, for the spirit of Judaism had long died within them; and among these were men who had considered themselves regenerators of Judaism. It was well for the Jewish people that they were thus freed from the misleading influence of such men, who, by virtue of their intelligence and their social position, could command positions of leadership. These deserters, relatively few, were really of little importance to the development of German Judaism, aside from the fact that they stood as a warning example to the others. Their departure from the ranks in no way determined the trend of this new period.

The problem of assimilation now became the burning question. The terms wherewith it might be solved were most unfavorable. Nowhere were there to be found Jewish communities of any solidarity after the Ghetto had been broken down. Numerous intelligent youths were singly installed in a non-Jewish environment as *Gymnasiasten und Studenten* (high school and university students) and also as merchants. Each had to make his own way. The fathers, who had been brought up under conditions entirely different, could do nothing but—at best—understand the struggles that their sons were living through; they could not, however, be their advisers, because their experience could not avail them.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century there

were indeed several distinguished rabbis—one need but recall the name of the Gaon R. Akiba Eger, great equally in learning and in ethics, and that of his friend, R. Moses Sofer of Frankfurt. But they considered themselves above all as protectors and keepers of the tradition which was being so persistently threatened. They saw safety only in loyal guardianship and in devoted study and teaching. That which these men accomplished for the Jews of Central Europe through sheer force of personality has been most valuable. But besides these *koryphae* of learning there should have been men who, on a firm basis of faith in tradition, could establish the proper synthesis between Judaism and the culture of the modern period. Unfortunately in the first decades of the century, the Jewish youth, filled with enthusiasm for knowledge, found this guidance but rarely. The results evidenced themselves in the radical Reform movement.

III. The Reform Movement

Often the platform of these young rebels was of an idealistic nature, in spite of the fact that it was mingled with unbecoming ambition and vanity. They thought that by adapting the forms of worship used by Christian cults to Jewish ritual they would beautify the latter and win back to the fold those who had strayed from it. Because of their dearth of Jewish feeling and knowledge, they dared to cut out portions of God's law that seemed to them to have become obsolete, thus hoping to save that which they considered essential. It was not with a desire to do evil, but rather with criminal reckless-

ness that they laid hands on that which had been sacred for thousands of years. They met the indignation of those who had remained unconditionally loyal to the Torah with scorn and contempt—in fact, they soon brought down upon them the denunciation of the government. In some cases they did not hesitate to try to force the benefits of Reform upon the "reactionaries" by the use of the police, a procedure which was answered by an appeal to the government. The concentration of their powers upon introducing all sorts of innovations against those faithful to the traditional ritual, with the determination to hurt their innermost holy feelings, led to the decline of Reform. It is difficult for us to understand how the introduction of an organ and a choir of women's voices could give rise to so brutal a conflict. Actually, and unknown to the Reformers, there was much more at issue: the fundamental right to make changes in God's law with the progress of time, and the fact that this assumed right implied a complete or partial questioning of the divine origin of the Torah.

Thus did the Reform movement attempt to shake the foundations of Judaism. With the exception of the advent of Karaism, so deeply rooted a conflict had not divided the Jewish people since the struggles between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And now it was not merely a small upper class that wished to tear itself loose from the law, but the Jews enlisted themselves in reform in ever-widening circles—not so much in theory as in practice, so that in a decade or so the number of German Jews who had remained true to the Torah had dropped to a

minority, a matter which later formidably threatened to strangle the whole of the Jewish nation.

"Die Wissenschaft des Judentums"

The part that it played in the spiritual life of Europe gave Judaic science a tremendous impetus. Philosophical, philological, and historical studies which had not been touched for centuries were begun anew, and showed more and more the use of the systematic methods of modern science. The furtherance of knowledge in certain fields and the attempts at criticism could not always boast of thoroughness and comprehensive knowledge, so that other modernists could accuse them with justice of superficiality; and often the scholarship lacked the sympathetic understanding of the intrinsic relationship between past and present and merely handled the subject as if it were more a matter of archeological interest than of the most powerful problems of life for the Jewish people. But these were the first attempts along a new path. That the scholars who remained loyal to the Torah only hesitatingly accepted the achievements of modern science can be understood psychologically, though this hesitation brought with it the most unfortunate results. Thus, for a long time, the universal conception continued that the science of Judaism and the denial of tradition were closely, indivisibly united, especially since most of the scholars interested in this science dedicated their works to Reform. Even Leopold Zunz, whose works have established him in a place of honor in the field of Judaic science, was not free from this error.

S. R. Hirsch

While those faithful to tradition contented themselves simply to stand aloof during the first third of the century, they began, in the second third, to take a positive stand toward the problem. Above everybody else, it was Samson Raphael Hirsch who (1808-1888) worked toward its solution with sympathetic understanding. He did not look upon the mingling of Judaism with European culture as a deplorable and unalterable condition, but he welcomed it joyously as a new task set before Judaism. All that was exalted in the spiritual life of the other nations was to serve Jewish learning and life, to beautify and to ennoble it. He sought to penetrate into the essence of Jewish law, to which he clung with immovable loyalty. Thus Hirsch became the leader of all who desired European culture and sought, at the same time, to remain unconditionally loyal to Torah. With more sharpness than depth, his erstwhile colleague and spiritual antipode, Abraham Geiger, attempted to attack the written and oral teachings of Judaism in order to destroy the foundations of tradition and to build the road toward the most radical Reform. Zacharias Frankel, on the other hand, stood between the Reformers and the unconditional upholders of tradition, trying to place himself in a conciliatory position.

Hildesheimer

This Breslau School, having as its main representative, besides Frankel, his colleague in the Breslau Theological Seminary, the well-known historian,

Heinrich Graetz, represented the beliefs of the majority of the influential men in the great Jewish communities during the second half of the century. They did not wish to tear themselves away from the beliefs of their forefathers, but at the same time they felt it necessary to go in the path that would improve their economic existence. Regretfully, but without much struggle, ever-increasing numbers discontinued the observance of the Sabbath, until in time those observing the Sabbath in Germany were in the minority. It became likely that the Breslau School would condone such laxity rather than conscientiously work for the upholding of God's teaching and law. It would have been tragic for the Jews in Germany if they had chosen members of the Breslau Seminary as their leaders. And it was a lucky thing that Israel Hildesheimer founded the Orthodox Theological Seminary of Berlin, the students of which became for the most part the standard-bearers of those who remained loyal to the Torah. The gradual revival of the Orthodox party, which had become the weaker of the two, was both directly and indirectly brought about by these men.

Political Conditions

The political condition of the Jews of Germany in the first half of the century varied in the different sections of the country. The equal civil rights which seemed so nearly theirs at the beginning of the century had still to be fought for. Gabriel Riesser's services in this cause were particularly distinguished. In the course of time, equality of rights for the Jew was declared throughout the land, although as a

matter of fact it was not everywhere realized. In the last two decades of the century a political and social reaction set in as a result of the anti-Semitic movement. Just as certainly as this may be deplored from a humanitarian standpoint, it is to be considered valuable and necessary in the experience of German Jewry, which was threatened seriously with destruction because of assimilation. Those especially hurt by it were the religiously indifferent, while the Orthodox Jews were protected by a more strongly pulsating religious life. The feeling of individuality as God's people had diminished considerably and become nothing more than a religious creed. The attacks upon them now stirred up these German Jews until they again felt their character as a people. After their reëstablishment of religion, it assumed a more nationalistic aspect and revived the old ideals of a religious nationality. Others, by placing more emphasis on the purely religious, and by denying everything nationalistic about it, sought to weaken the anti-Semitic movement. But in this very class there was evinced, with but few exceptions, an equally strong feeling of union with all of Judaism; and they occupied themselves in founding welfare organizations through the activity of which this feeling of loyalty to the race was strengthened.

This spiritual leadership of Western and Central Europe came for the most part from lands of German culture. The most distinguished scholars, in their own desire for development, tended toward Germany. As a matter of fact, assimilation was working even more havoc in other countries, where

the Jews were more widely scattered than in Germany. Hungary was an exception, where the Jewish community even to-day shows a mixture of West and East. The close settlements of the Jews in that country gave them a natural solidarity. The sharp distinction between the Orthodox and the Neological communities did much to strengthen the former.

France and England

The policy of equal civil rights to Jews was not only legally but actually realized in France and England, much more so than in Germany, so that it was not unusual to find Jewish officers of state in those countries. In spite of the strong tendency toward assimilation in France, and in spite of the process of dissolution which the Jewish religion seemed to be undergoing there, the feeling of Jewish unity was strong, as is shown by the founding of the Alliance Israelite Universelle in France. As fateful as the Alliance proved to be in its efforts to Gallicize the Jews of the Orient, just so salutary were its services in raising the political and social position of its oppressed brethren. The founding of the Alliance was also of particular importance to all of Western and Central European Jewry, as the first attempt to establish a tie among all the Jews of the Diaspora. Although it was only partly successful, the effect that this attempt has had upon its adherents and its enemies cannot be overlooked.

The Jews of Russia

The boundary line of Russia stood like an insurmountable wall between the Jews of that country

and those of Western Europe. Grouped together in great masses, millions of Jews lived in the erstwhile Polish provinces. With medieval zeal the Russians endeavored to convert the Jews to Greek Catholicism, or to make them suffer for their stubbornness. With the exception of a few privileged characters, the Jews were forced to live in the western and southern governments and were driven mercilessly from the country into the cities. The highest and lowliest officials vied with each other in torturing and ravishing the Jews, so that they had no possibility of normal development—and then the Jews themselves were blamed for their wretched condition! The relief that the reign of Alexander II brought was only transitory. The oppression took on a more hateful and deliberate form under his successors, developing into well-organized massacres, in which the crazed mob was aided by state officials and by the army. An exodus of hundreds of thousands now began toward Western Europe, and especially to America. The excessive birth rate among the Jews under the Russian yoke would have added much to their misery had the emigrants not sent aid to their families in Russia and thus brought relief. The money sent by relatives was, to numberless Jews, their sole means of subsistence. Later, too, during the World War and the post-war period, the Russian Jews owed their very lives to the beneficence of those who had once been driven out of Russia. On the other hand, the Czarist persecutions gave the Palestine movement a mighty impetus. Once more, against his will, did the spirit of Esau have to bless Jacob.

Assimilation

In spite of the horrible oppression that the Jews suffered in the nineteenth century, a stirring spiritual life was kept active among them. The Talmudical academy in Wolosyn, which was erected according to the ideals of the Wilner Gaon by his faithful disciple R. Chaim, was the center of the study of Torah for several decades. Despite the Reformers, the *Maskilim* organized to work in league with the Russian government, the rabbis not recognized by the state remained the real spiritual leaders of the people because of the inherent authority of their knowledge and character. Like their German predecessors, these Russian Reformers thought that, with the aid of the government, they could force European culture as they understood it upon their brethren. The Russian Jews, having so long suffered at the hands of the enemy, now had to face this internal cultural struggle. The attacks that first the Germanized and then the Russified Jews made on Jewish tradition only resulted in a greater desire on the part of the masses to withdraw themselves as far as possible from this so-called European culture. Thus, the words "educated" and "irreligious" became synonymous. Even the most genuine and sincere attempts to raise the social position of the Jews were met by the leaders and the masses who were loyal to tradition with the keenest antagonism and distrust. Hence, those who seriously strove to bring about a harmonious relationship between Jewish and general culture were persecuted and disowned by the people whom they wished to serve.

Several of these men, in fact, who could have done much in Poland and Russia, preferred to carry on their campaign by leaving their home land. The literature in the Russian language, the main tendency of which was toward assimilation with the non-Jewish Russian intelligenzia, gradually paled beside the Yiddish and Hebrew writings, which assumed ever greater importance.

Renascence

No matter how much these attacks upon tradition may have hurt the Jews, the fact that they created literary works of permanent value and awakened the fighting spirit of slumbering Orthodoxy cannot be overlooked. This new Hebrew literature was at first regarded with suspicion, but the holy language owes its renascence to the Hebrew writers of the end of the nineteenth century. Seeing that after the death of Alexander II the persecution of the Jews only increased in brutality, the Russo-Jewish intelligenzia began to realize that no hope of betterment was to come through assimilation. The disillusionment of these men, who saw their whole life work now in ruins, was tragic. Very few found their way back to the soul of their people. Most of them enlisted their energies in nationalistic self-assertion. Pinsker's call for auto-emancipation and settlement in politically secure Jewish territory electrified the people. While the hard facts of reality drew ever-increasing numbers of emigrants toward America, the cry of the new idealist was "Palestine," there to build a refuge for the Jews. Even among the far-removed circles of Orthodoxy,

people turned their faces with hope toward Palestine. They were led by R. Samuel Mohilewer.

Theodore Herzl

During the eighties these ideals were essentially confined to Russia and her neighboring countries, Galicia and Roumania. From a cultural and economical viewpoint, the Jews in these latter countries were practically in the same position as in Russia; in Roumania their political position was like that in the Czarist government.

The Jewish-nationalistic movement did not spread in Central and Western Europe until the last decade of the century, when the flames of anti-Semitism flared up.

Now in the most assimilated classes of Jews the discouragement of defeat was keenly felt. The Zionist movement found its rightful political leader in Theodore Herzl. The realization that the Jews were a nation—and the large Jewish settlements of Eastern Europe had never thought otherwise—was something new, when Herzl announced it to the Jews of Western Europe. Reform and assimilation had banished nationalistic feeling to the realms of the subconscious; even among those who had remained loyal to the Torah it had faded into a mere shadow. More important than the practical work done for Palestine during the first two decades of modern Zionism was its ideology—the thought that all the Jews, scattered over the whole globe, were, in spite of their great differences, one distinct nation, and that the tremendous problem of the Jew in both the East and West could not be solved by assimila-

tion with the surrounding countries or by lavish philanthropic donations. But more tragic than the picture of spiritual and physical suffering which Zionism sought to cover was the fact that this great movement, aiming to bring Israel back to its home land, did not care to make God's law its active power, but sought rather to deprive the Jews of their identity as God's people.

Zionism

The same movement that worked with all its might against the assimilation of the Jew as an individual, denied, in defiance of all history, the individuality of the Jews as the people of God, and wished to assimilate them as a nation among nations. This was the reason why the great majority of the loyalists to the Torah withheld themselves from Zionism.

It is easily understood that most of the assimilated Western Jews, and also the small class of those who held similar views in Eastern Europe, declined to have anything to do with the Zionist movement. But the Jewish Socialist working class of Russia also disapproved of Zionism both nationalistically and civically.

Gradually it was understood by almost all classes of society that assimilation was not the solution of the Jewish problem. Actual conversion to the religion of the state could thoroughly absorb a few Jews into the population of the country; often even these individual instances proved unsuccessful. Baptism proved to be no protection against anti-Semitism, which evidenced itself even more strongly.

Baptized Jews were just as readily attacked as the unbaptized.

On the eve of the World War, the condition of the Jewish people was more miserable than was generally known. At the same time that the minority —the Western Jews—lived under politically tolerable and economically favorable conditions, the great East European Jewish masses were living in political distress and in economic martyrdom. Saddest of all was the lack of spiritual firmness of faith in Judaism and in the Jewish people, which steadily was dying out both in the West and in the East. Only a small minority really believed in the Zionistic ideal.

But to those within the circle, who had remained true to God's law, there came the realization that the individuality of the Jewish people did not lie entirely in the fact that they were a nation, nor in that they were all of one religion. And, recognizing this, there came to all the millions of loyalists a desire to unite, and in an organized effort to express the will of the Jewish people—not to be assimilated either individually or collectively with the other nations, but to assert themselves in their own historical right; to show the world that they were deserving of the name: The People of God.

IV. The Meaning of Jewish History

Now that we have reviewed the whole panorama of our people's history, we ask ourselves what its meaning may be. Is there not something unnatural in such a question? Does it not seem to signify that we consider our history a completed thing, instead of recognizing it as something alive and still

in the process of development? No, we do not consider the Jewish people a thing of the past, but of the mighty present, striving for even a greater future. And yet we feel it our right and our duty to meditate upon the meaning of our development and our present state, just as the mature man glances back from time to time on his origin and the process of his own growth in order to determine the sources and limitations of his own abilities and thus be able to proceed farther on the path of life. We may consider our people as a great personality wrapped up within itself; and a moment of thought as to what we have already experienced will help us gather our forces in our march onward.

Many generations have claimed their particular time to be the beginning of a new period; but we believe that we are especially justified in our assumption. The unparalleled experience of the World War has had, considered from every standpoint, so many decisive effects that for this reason alone the present time must be recognized as a new starting point in history. The discontinuation of Russia as the center of Judaism; the transfer of the economic balance of power to American Jewry; closely bound up with that, the increasing importance of Jewish cultural life in America; and particularly the activity in Palestine, such as has not been seen for one and a half millenniums—all of these are facts which justify us in regarding our period as a turn of the times. Above all, the inestimable significance which the Holy Land holds for the most far-flung Jewish communities, associated with the revival of the Hebrew tongue, fills us with

the hope that after these seventeen hundred years of exile a return home is to be vouchsafed us. We should like to return immediately without delay; but a foreboding of peril does not permit us to fulfill our eager wishes in such haste.

At the beginning of our history as a people, this mission was entrusted to us: "You shall be a nation of priests unto Me, a holy people." Israel's very existence is circumscribed by these words. They were not to live only for themselves, but were to be the priest-state for mankind. Certainly we have not accomplished this ideal. When, however, we view the history of our people in retrospect, as it stretches over three thousand years down the lists of time, we can say: It is very evident that we have striven toward that goal. And this very thing seems to us, as we gaze backward, to be the actual meaning in the history of the Jewish people as they strode, burdened with their mission, through the history of mankind. The fact that a people was entrusted with such a mission, and that this people looked upon the *civitas dei* as their particular destiny, gives the history of the world a very definite character—that of the revelation of God's will. Not accident, not blind evolution, rules the history of mankind, but a definite goal, set at the beginning, which is to be attained in the end, even if the path be zigzag or spiral. And in order that this goal may not be forgotten, the nation of priests is here to remind us of it. They were to have been conscientiously effective messengers of God's will. That conscious will was lacking only too often. The fact, however, that the nation has continued to exist

(considering the laws that build and ruin nations) shows that it has been active.

God's people have been exposed to the most terrible persecutions. The brief annals of Jewish martyrdom from the Middle Ages unto very modern times read like passionate accusations of the nations of Europe—in the Byzantine Empire and in Rome; on the banks of the Thames, as well as on the Rhine; in France, as in Spain; in Poland and in the Ukraine. The atrocities committed against the Jews in the name of religion and nationalism mark the darkest portion of the Occidental world. From the legislation of the last rulers of the Roman and Byzantine Empires to deprive the Jews of their rights, to the bestial deeds of crazed mobs and the bloodthirsty fanaticism of savage priests—all of this unexampled treachery could wound and oppress the Jews, but could not break them. Israel shielded itself from all oppression and persecution with the thought of its mission as God's people and with the hope for divine aid. Again and again they raised their eyes toward heaven saying: "And in spite of all this we have not forgotten Thy name. O Thou too, forget not us!"

And the Jewish people proved to be indestructible. Despots in their wrath and mobs in their hatred swore to annihilate it—and it lives. World empires appear and vanish; nations rise and fall—but the tribe of Jacob remains firm. It was indeed through this perseverance in the face of certain death that Israel proved itself to be the true nation of priests, verily the servant of God, who through all suffering still serves the Master, the Ruler and Creator of the universe.

From a Bird's-Eye View

From a bird's-eye view we look down upon Israel and over three and a half thousand years of its history—the contemporary of Babylonia and Egypt, Athens and Rome, and now as vigorous as the youngest nations of modern Europe and America. Be it in the form of an independent state or as a people transplanted into exile; be it scattered in a thousand splinters over a Diaspora that covers the globe, Israel still remains one of the peoples of the world, distinct in its being the religious nation which cannot be judged according to the ordinary standards of other nations; living, nevertheless, inseparably among them, sharing their joys and their sorrows, involved in the minutest details of their economic existence, enriching their spiritual life and being enriched by them—and yet always maintaining its individuality.

What Israel Stood For

Through its thousands of years of history Israel has been considered by the peoples of the world as a nation apart and unadaptable; therefore it was often hated and envied, seldom honored and loved. And yet it is this inner independence which was and still is of such eminent importance to the history of the development of mankind. It upheld the creed of one Creator of the universe before the polytheistic antiquity of the Empire of the Pharaohs and of Babylonia. It raised the ideal of truth before the Hellenistic ideal of beauty. It proved the supremacy

of the inner freedom in service to God over Rome's principle of might. In contrast to visionary youthful Christianity, it advocated the clear consciousness of God, by which His people are bound to their Maker through His law; in opposition to the greed for power of the medieval church, it brought the stubbornness that will bend only before its own God; in contrast to the fatalism of Islam, it preached the responsibility of the free will.

What Israel Stands for To-day

And when the modern period began for the nations of Europe, Israel looked on and beheld the newly awakened power that would bring its people relief after centuries of suffering, at the same time aware of the dangers to its own spiritual life. Only too often had the Jewish people lost gifted sons, who had cut themselves off from their own people and enriched the outer world. We mourn their loss but we understand that even their alienation from us and their complete assimilation with the spiritual life of other peoples have their historical value. Of much greater importance to us and to humanity is it that we keep ourselves and our identity as a nation of priests intact, and yet at the same time take active part in the spiritual and economic life of the nations. We know well enough that we and the nations of the world are still far from the goal—the all-penetrating, all-enveloping acknowledgment of God; but in spite of many sad experiences in the chaotic and discouraging process of formation, we see the progress of humanity, not only from a

technical standpoint, but also in the social and ethical sense. And we do not, by any means, consider ourselves only as those who have given; we acknowledge thankfully the inspiration and the advancement we have had in these thousands of years. Even as far back as the third century, the great Palestinian Amoraim pointed out the fact that the Hellenic feeling for beauty was worthy also of Israel's consideration. In the same way do we look upon the close kinship between the Jewish people and the modern world. Just as the true teacher feels that he receives far more from his pupil than he himself can give, so the people of God fulfills its historical duty as the educator of mankind only after it has penetrated deeply into the spiritual life of the nations, has acquired its most valuable intellectual and esthetic treasures and its social and ethical ideals, and has interfused these with its own religious spirit, giving it back to the nations in exalted form.

Neither to become assimilated with the others, nor yet to be isolated from them completely, but rather to live with them in constant exchange of thought and act in order to fulfill its own mission by teaching the supremacy of God—this seems to us to be the historical position of Israel. The conscious and unconscious striving toward this ideal seems to us to be the meaning of all Jewish history. It adds new meaning to the promise of the prophet for the achievement of the goal of mankind.

> And it shall come to pass in the end of days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established above the tops of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills. And all the nations shall

flow unto it. Many peoples shall strive to approach it and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us of His way and that we may walk in His paths; for from Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of God from Jerusalem.

X

MARRIAGE IN JUDAISM

BY

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X

MARRIAGE IN JUDAISM

An ingenious writer of our day declares that the culture of a people may be judged by three considerations: their appreciation of human life; the position of the stranger among them; and the position of their women.

If we apply these criteria to Judaism, its high appreciation of human life will hardly be disputed. Murder was regarded as a crime against God and against the community that could not be expiated by any form of material payment. Among some ancient peoples murder was regarded as a private crime, not as an infringement of public law—a conception exemplified by the institution of the fine as the punishment for committing murder. On Mount Sinai the commandment was first given: Thou shalt not kill! A money payment was no longer to be considered as exonerating a murderer. Judaism proclaims man created in the image of God; for that reason "Whoso sheddeth man's blood shall be put to death by men."

From the notion that Judaism holds of man follows its attitude toward the stranger. While for the Greek every stranger was a barbarian, the Jew is ordered to love the foreigner, "for you were foreigners yourselves in Egypt." By the word *ger*

(stranger) every one is meant who observes the specific seven commandments of Noah,[1] which include the precepts of common morality. Such *ger* enjoys the full protection of the law. In these two matters Judaism is thus not only far beyond the culture of the ancient peoples, but having by its Bible uplifted the character of man it has raised all morality to a higher level.

Judaism and Orientalism

As to the position of women, the superiority of Judaism is not generally acknowledged, due to a confusion of Judaism with the general psychology of the East. The Orient was the nursery of the Jewish people, so that in its manners and customs it had many things in common with the Oriental peoples, but the spirit living in the Jewish forms is quite unique, in that it is highly influenced by God's law, the Torah, whereby the whole mentality of the Jewish people has been transformed. The Holy Scripture and the numerous sayings of our Rabbis give us a clear picture of the position of the Jewish wife. Furthermore, the Jewish forms of match-making, betrothal, marriage, and dissolution of marriage are of the highest importance in judging the dignity that is granted to women.

Marriage in the Bible

The prescriptions of the Jewish marriage law,

[1] The Noahide Laws obligatory upon all mankind, distinguished from such as bind Jews alone, are: the promotion of justice and the prohibition of immorality, bloodshed, idolatry, blasphemy, robbery, and the eating of flesh cut from living animals (Tos. Ab. Z., VIII).

the wedding customs in the different phases of Jewish history and in different countries, perhaps also an examination of the changes that the modern spirit has produced, can give us a deeper glimpse of the psychological development of our people. The ideal of marriage as Judaism understands it is already revealed in the Biblical story of the creation of the wife. Man feels lonely; the wife is given him as "a help"; "and they shall be one flesh" (*lebasar echad*).

The basis of marriage is morality. "You shall be holy" especially applies to marriage. The Ten Commandments prohibit not alone murder and theft, but also adultery. Marriage is declared inviolable, for marriage is not only a legal contract, but is divinely moral. By adultery not merely private interests are violated; it is a crime against God that may be avenged by death. By this principle the generative instinct is to be subordinated to a higher end, the preservation of man created by God in his image. The principal aim of marriage is generating children; the phrase *"Peru urevu"* ("Be fruitful and multiply,") is the first of the 613 commandments. "Your wife, a fruitful vine within your house, your children like olive-sprouts round your table"—that is the picture which the psalmist draws of wedded life agreeable to God. Therefore illegitimate intercourse is extreme debauchery according to Jewish ideas, and in wedded life contraception is a grave sin which the Bible and Talmud severely condemn.

These ideas are absolutely opposed to those of other ancient peoples. Plato says that the ideal of the republic is the generation of children for the

state, therefore wives and children belong to the community. Among the Romans the exchange of wives was permitted. In antiquity the almightiness of the state was taken for granted, and the right of the individual was esteemed only so far as it was capable of advancing the public welfare. It followed from this that exposing and killing new-born children was allowed, and that exposing and killing mutilated children that are of no use to the state was not only not punishable, but was even made a duty. According to the doctrine of the Torah all is the work of Providence; every new-born child, whatever shape he may have, on entering life becomes a person, and encroachment on his right of living is no less to be punished than the murder of an adult.

This high conception of marriage and family is already to be seen in the history of our early fathers. In Isaac's wooing of Rebecca we see of what importance to Abraham is the place the wife is to take in his son's house. Eleazar is not to fetch her from Canaan, known for its depravity, but from Aram, out of Abraham's family. And Eleazar himself hopes to recognize the wife destined for his master's son by her ready helpfulness and charity. What follows again shows us how different the position of the women in Israel was from that among the other ancient peoples. There is no question of buying the bride. Having obtained the consent of her guardian, given as a dictate of divine Providence, Rebecca receives precious jewels, silver and gold; her brother and her mother receive only presents of minor worth. The maiden is not disposed of with-

out being asked. "We shall call the maiden and ask her," say the family. Therefore do our Rabbis remark: "We learn from these words that a maiden is not to be married without her consent." Already there is thought of an interval between betrothal and marriage, for the relatives wish that the maiden still remain with them ten or twelve months. This request, however, is not granted.

The Holy Scripture nowhere describes the celebration of a wedding. At the marriage of Laban's daughters it mentions the wedding-week. Laban tells Jacob that he may have Rachel as wife at the end of the wedding-week of Leah. This is more definitely spoken of at Samson's marriage in the Book of Judges. We may conclude, however, from the prophet's words repeated on different occasions that the wedding was celebrated with great festivity. "Voice of delight and the voice of joy, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride."

The marriage contract, the *kethuba,* is mentioned at a very early time; its main clauses are given in the Torah itself. As to the written marriage contract, there is, according to tradition, a difference between the wives and the concubines, the *pilagshim* often spoke of in the Torah. The latter are not given such a document.

Polygamy versus Monogamy

One may saw a few words here about the opinions of Judaism on monogamy and polygamy. According to the moral ideas of the present, it is only monogamy that may be considered the basis of wedded life. What does the Judaism of Bible and

Talmud think of this? There is no doubt that the Bible permits polygamy, but it is certain that monogamy corresponds more closely to the spirit of Judaism. If polygamy is permitted, this is, as it were, a concession to human nature, which we may find comprehensible in the light of true knowledge of the Pentateuchal period.

That, however, the Torah sets monogamy as its aim, is proved by the words in the beginning of the Bible: "Therefore man leaves his father and mother and joins his wife." It is again proved by the commandment that the high priest, the embodiment of holiness, must live in monogamy. It is above all demonstrated by the fact that most of the prominent men of the Holy Scripture lived in monogamy, and that for the instances of polygamy special reasons are given. There are frequent comparisons of the relation between God and Israel with married life, as in Malachi: "The Eternal is witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you were faithless, though she is your companion and the wife of your union." None of the Rabbis of the Mishna and the Talmud ever lived in polygamy, and the decree of Rabbenu Gershom in the eleventh century [2] was nothing but the sanction of a long-existing condition.

The Jewish View of Wifehood

In the Talmud we have a more circumstantial report of the preparations for marriage and of the

[2] Rabbi Gershom ben Yehudah (d. 1040) (called affectionately "Our Rabbi Gershom, the Light of the Diaspora") decreed excommunication as the punishment for a man who committed bigamy. His decree became the law of Jewry first in Europe, gradually all over the globe.

actual ceremony. The general ideas of marriage show the high ethical spirit of the Bible. "Whosoever lives without a wife," say the Sages, "is without joy, without blessing, without happiness, without Torah, without bulwark, without peace; who lives without a wife is no man at all." "Everyone must heed his wife's honor; because for the wife's sake the house is blessed." "He who loves his wife as himself and honors her more than himself, who brings up his sons and his daughters to lead an irreproachable life and marries them while they are young, of him is said: 'You will see that peace is in your tent.'" "Happy the man for whom his wife, his Torah, and his work are witness; of him is said: 'Your source, the origin and the root of all your happiness is blessed.'"

The betrothal is often preceded by *shidduchim,* the negotiation. The marriage proper is divided into two parts: *erusin,* the betrothal, and *nesuin,* the culminating ceremony. The former represents the civil part of the marriage; *nesuin* the religious and moral part of it. For though marriage is to the Jew a contract, this is only one part of its essence. With *erusin* is combined *kiddushin,* the sanctifying of the woman by which the betrothed becomes a wife in all respects. There existed no "engagement," as we know it, at the time of the Talmud. The interval between betrothal and marriage was, for a virgin, twelve months, for a widow thirty days, followed by the *nesuin,* the bringing home of the bride.

The Bridal Pair

The bridal pair were much honored and had various social and liturgical privileges. The bride

had a special seat of honor and was led through the town in festival procession on an adorned litter. To sing hymns in honor of the bride, to join the solemn bridal procession, to enhance the conviviality of the guests, all this was a religious duty. King Agrippa made way for a bridal procession, saying: "I wear the crown constantly, and I therefore pay homage to her who wears it only for this hour." The study of the law may be interrupted, according to the words of our Rabbis, in order to join in the hymn for the bridal pair. Rabbi Jehuda ben Ilai is said to have caused his disciples to join the bridal procession which he saw passing by, saying: "The practice of the law is preferable to the theoretical study." In glorifying the bride, the school of Shammai demanded that only her real virtues should be mentioned, while the disciples of Hillel gave full scope to their poetical enthusiasm. The Talmud has preserved fragments of some bridal hymns, such as: "She does not require paint for the face nor ointment, nor hair dye, the graceful gazelle." Rabbi Judah ben Ilai and R. Samuel bar Isaac danced before the bride, swinging myrtle stalks and singing bridal hymns. One of the Sages reproached the latter because he derogated from his own dignity by doing so. But when R. Samuel died a glare of fire was seen between his bier and the people, which symbolic distinction was attributed to the merit he had gained by his glorification of the brides.

At the wedding the bridegroom and the bride appeared in festival procession, accompanied by the *shushbinim,* the wedding retinue, and the following crowd. Crowns, wreaths of roses, myrtle, olive

twigs and reed, ornaments of gold, crystal, and Milanesian silk adorned the head of the bride. After the destruction of the Temple this custom was abolished. Ashes were strewn on the bridegroom's forehead in remembrance of the destruction of the sanctuary. On the way to the place of the wedding, oil and wine were poured and nuts thrown. This custom, however, was not practiced at a widow's marriage.

The Nuptial Feast

There reigned an unrestrained hilarity at the nuptial feast. Dancing and music embellished the feast, and gay songs were sung that attracted a listening crowd. But moderation in joy is recommended even at weddings. Rabbi Ashi, perceiving at his son's marriage that the assemblage had abandoned themselves to hilarity, broke a precious vessel in order to suppress their exuberance. R. Hamnuna, summoned to intone a song, burst out into the words: "Woe to us, we must die, woe to us, we must die!" Whereupon the other exclaimed: "Hail to the Torah! Hail to the Law, that protects us!" The later Rabbis, who too could not imagine a wedding without music, restricted the songs to religious hymns and banished dancing completely, after the word of the Holy Scripture: "Hand touching hand does not remain pure."

At the wedding meal the bridegroom was seated at the head of the table. The friends brought wedding presents of a sort regulated by fixed laws. The bridegroom, too, sent certain presents to the bride before the wedding, called *siblonoth*. The festivities lasted a week, after the ancient Biblical custom.

On the Sabbath after the wedding, the bridegroom still enjoys certain liturgical privileges. This custom has its origin in a very early time. It is told that in building the Temple King Solomon erected two places of charity, ordering two doors to be made, one for the bridegrooms, the others for mourners and the excommunicated. On the Sabbath the inhabitants of Jerusalem assembled between these two doors and waited for those who passed through them. To the bridegrooms they cried: "May God who sits on the throne in this house, rejoice you with sons and daughters." To the mourners they cried: "May He who sits on the throne in this house comfort you." And to those that followed them they exclaimed: "May He who sits on the throne in this house lead your heart to contrition that the community may receive you in love again." After the destruction of the Temple it was determined that bridegrooms and mourners should enter the synagogue on the Sabbath—the former, that others might enjoy their happiness, the latter, to be comforted.

Husband and Wife

During the time following the editing of the Talmud, the general populace held a crude and sensual notion of marriage, whereas in Judaism we find the highest respect and awe for the holiness of marriage, based on the strictly religious concept of life. Though romantic love marriages were rare, a union against the inclination of the young people was not approved. Husband and wife lived in harmony, and it was thought shameful to offend or to harm one's wife. A husband, says Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg,

so devoid of feeling as to beat his wife should be excommunicated and chastised; and his hand should be hewn off if he does not cease his abuse. It was the custom to marry the children early, first for reasons of morality, secondly because they always feared to lose the fixed dowry during a possible persecution. *Shadchanim* or "marriage intermediaries" were to the Jews a most deserving and pious group. They regarded God as the first matchmaker. This activity therefore had little in common with to-day's business of contriving marriages (marriage brokers).

The Ceremony in Germany

Preceding the union was the inscribing of the marriage contract, which was celebrated by a feast, called *knas-fest* or feast of the fine, because then was fixed the sum to be paid if the betrothal were later annulled. In medieval France we find now and then an interval between wooing (*erusin*) and marriage (*nesuin*). In Germany this was hardly known in the beginning of the fifteenth century. On the previous evening the wedding presents (*siblonoth*) were solemnly handed to the bride, generally a girdle set with gold, a veil, and the *kirsen*. This last was a rather ample mantle with tight sleeves, lined with silk and guimped with furs. Another festival was celebrated on the Friday eve preceding the wedding, in honor of the parents; at this feast wine and fruit were served and nuts distributed. This festival was called *Spinholz*, a name probably of non-Jewish origin, since a requisite ornament of the bridal carriage was the distaff or the spinning wheel. Friday

was preferred as the wedding day, as is still the case among the Jews of the East, so that the poor might combine the feast with that of the Sabbath.

The wedding day, as it was celebrated in Mayence and with few changes in the other parts of Germany, is described by contemporary authors. On Friday morning, the sacristan of the synagogue calls all to prayer and to the *meien,* a kind of dance, nowadays known in the south of Germany as *Maanleading.* The rabbi and the most prominent members of the community, accompanied by music and torches, enter the courtyard of the synagogue, thereupon the torch-bearers and the musicians go to fetch the bride and her escort of friends. As soon as the bride reaches the court of the synagogue, the bridegroom is led to meet her. As he seizes his bride's hand, those present bestrew them with grains of wheat, calling: "May He surround your home with peace and satiate you with the marrow of the wheat." (Coins for the poor have been mixed among the grains.) Hand in hand the couple then go to the door of the synagogue, where they seat themselves in state; then the bride is again led home to finish her preparations. Instead of the usual coat she dons the *kirsen,* which the married women wear on holidays. Under it she wears a white shroud, the *sargenes,* which is to moderate her joy and at the same time recall to her the mourning for Zion.

The bridegroom, too, is to be reminded of Israel's grief. He wears the Sabbath clothes, but draws over his head the *gughel,* a mourning hood. The place where the *tefillin* are laid is strewn with ashes. He takes the seat of honor beside the holy ark, at

the northeastern side. Then begins the morning divine service, immediately followed by the nuptial ceremony. The bride is led, accompanied by music, to the door of the synagogue, and while she is there the rabbi goes for the bridegroom and leads him to the Almenor, in the center of the synagogue. Then the rabbi, accompanied by prominent members of the community, proceeds to the door of the synagogue to fetch the bride. The bridegroom leading the bride by her dress draws her to his right side. The mother of the bridegroom and the mother of the bride are standing by the *almemor* (reading desk) during the whole nuptial ceremony. The bride's head is covered with the *tallith* (the prayer shawl) or with the long end of the bridegroom's hood. Then follow the ceremony and general congratulations, after which the bridegroom is led home; he then goes to the door to meet the bride, whose hand he places on the doorpost, thus proclaiming her mistress of the house.

Often the nuptial ceremony was performed toward evening. The festival in the "bride's house" (which every greater community possessed) always began in the evening, and lasted, except as interrupted by the Sabbath morning service, till Sunday morning. At this service the bridegroom was given a seat of honor near the holy ark and enjoyed other privileges.

Thus were weddings usually celebrated in the Jewish communities of Germany. In other countries, differences in detail are ascribed to influences of the environment. Maimonides blames the Jews of Egypt for adopting non-Jewish customs at their

weddings and performing a kind of mummery. The bride would cover her head with a helmet, carry a sword in her hand, and dancing thus lead the procession of the wedding-guests. The bridegroom was then tricked up like a woman, the boys present were dressed in women's frocks and their nails dyed with henna. Maimonides relates that he succeeded in wholly abolishing this custom, though he met with violent resistance.

Obstacles to Marriage

There are many important regulations in the Bible and Talmud on marriage and its dissolution. In Leviticus xviii marriage between near relations is prohibited; such sexual union is designated as an "atrocity." Our Sages have forbidden the marriage between still other degrees of relationship (*semichot*). Some prohibitions are based on reasons of chastity. He who has committed adultery with another man's wife or is strongly suspected of forbidden intercourse with the wife of another is never allowed to marry her, even if the husband has died or has divorced her. The husband is not allowed to remarry a woman divorced from him if she has married another man in the meantime. Whosoever has borne witness of a husband's death or has brought the bill of divorce to the wife shall not marry her, lest he be suspected to have borne false witness with criminal intent. Moreover, marriage with a *mamzer,* that is, one who was engendered in incest or adultery, is forbidden. There is no conjugal union with members of other peoples or faiths. There are also some stringent marriage laws binding on the priests. A woman whose hus-

band has died without children and has left a brother is not allowed to marry a stranger, unless the surviving brother has performed the act of *chalitzah* (Deut. xxiv. 1-6) and has declared before a tribunal that he does not wish to marry her. Great difference of age between husband and wife is considered as a moral obstacle to marriage. Purity of family and a worthy descent are of great importance: "You may sell your whole property in order to be able to marry the daughter of a learned man." "You must not marry for money's sake; he who marries a wife because of her fortune, will have no blessing of it."

Marriage Ceremony

There is no betrothal, in the modern sense of the word, that may be dissolved by mutual agreement. The solemn promise of *erusin* is already the beginning of marriage. The wife becomes holy by marriage and is not even to be touched by anyone but her husband.

The usual symbol of *kiddushin* is the giving of money or something of value; at the same time the words must be spoken: "You shall be sanctified to me in accordance with the law of Moses and Israel." Only in later times did the wedding-ring become the customary symbol. That this act may be legal, the presence of two witnesses is necessary. The betrothal may also be performed through an authorized proxy of either side. A benediction is spoken in presence of ten adult person (*Birchath Erusin*); the contents of this benediction is a praise of God, who has forbidden immoral relationships and who does not allow the fulfillment of the union before

the ceremonies of *chuppah* (the bridal canopy) and *kiddushin.*

Betrothal and marriage may be concluded only by mutual agreement and when bridegroom and bride are mature. But the father can betroth his minor daughter before maturity. The reason for this is not the inferiority of the woman, but the loneliness and poverty in which the Oriental female often found herself at her father's death; the betrothal is arranged to secure a protector for the girl. The law of the Talmud orders that, at the girl's wish, the marriage is not to be concluded before her majority; and the great Rab (d. 247 C.E.) expressly ordered that no one betroth his minor daughter. In the later times of persecution in France and Germany this ordinance was not always followed, because, as the Tosafists say, "Sufferings increase daily, and driven from one place to another, we find no safe abode. If anyone has now the possibility to provide for his daughter, perhaps later on he may no longer have this chance and she will then remain unmarried."

The completion of the ceremony is made by *chuppah,* at which in the presence of ten men benedictions are spoken over a cup of wine. These refer to the wonderful institution of marriage and invoke God's blessing on the bridal pair. The presence of a minister is not necessary, but as at marriages questions of religious law often arise the nuptial benediction should be spoken only by those who possess a thorough knowledge of religious law. The husband assigns to his wife the sum of the *kethubah* (wedding contract), which she may demand at his death

or in case of divorce. At the time of the Talmud this amounted to two hundred *zuz* (florins), for a virgin; and one hundred *zuz* for a widow or divorcee.

This stipulation was made for the wife's protection, in order to make divorce more difficult for the husband.

The essence of the *kethubah* is contained in the following clause: "The bridegroom says to the bride: 'Become thou my wife according to the law of Moses and Israel and I shall serve you, honor you and provide for you according to the manner of Jewish men, who serve, honor and provide for their wives IN TRUTH.' "

The husband charges himself with the duty of feeding and clothing his wife, of living with her conjugally, of providing physician and drugs when needed, of ransoming her in case of captivity, and of providing a suitable funeral at her death. On her side the wife must keep the house, spin, cook, bake, and nurse her children. If she has brought several maidservants with her, they may keep the house for her; but she must not be wholly unoccupied, for idleness leads to immorality. In general it is said: "The wife arises with her husband, but she does not descend with him," that is, she enjoys the privileges of his social position and of the customary position of the wife in his family, but she need not give up the privileges she has enjoyed in her own family.

Divorce

The marriage is dissolved either by the husband's death or by divorce. But there must be secure

proof of the husband's death, either by testimony of witnesses or identification of the corpse. If only one witness or the wife herself gives unmistakable evidence of the death, it is sufficient. This provision was made in order that the wife need not spend her life as an *agunah* (deserted wife). It is, moreover, often impossible to find two witnesses of the death if it occurred at any distance. This ordinance was determined by the consideration that the wife herself would make the most scrupulous inquiries before concluding a second marriage, since she would incur the gravest hardships if the deposition subsequently proved to be untrue. The common law of the Bible and the Talmud does not allow a tribunal to declare any one dead in law owing to prolonged absence.

Marriage, which is not only a contract but a relation sanctified by God, cannot be dissolved from without. The divorce is proposed by the husband. "He may write her a bill of divorce (the *get*) and give it into her hand." The wife, however, is not altogether in the husband's power. In certain cases the tribunal can force the husband to divorce her. Rabenu Gershom threatened with excommunication one who would separate from his wife without her agreement: "He who separates from his wife is odious to God." The altar sheds tears over him who forsakes the wife of his youth.

But the Torah does not assume the indissolubility of marriage. For the basis of marriage is morality, and where this basis is in danger, where a harmonious life is no more possible, the marriage shall not be maintained by a merely external

bond. When husband and wife demand the dissolution of marriage there can be no judicial choice. The schools of Shammai and Hillel were of different opinions as to the circumstances which require divorce. The former permitted it only on account of a lascivious life; the latter for causes disturbing the domestic peace as well. In some cases the divorce is forced by the tribunal, as when the wife has committed adultery, or when in consummation of the marriage a law of the Bible or the Talmud has been transgressed. The husband may propose divorce if his wife violates the moral law or if by neglecting her duties she causes her husband unconsciously to transgress ritual regulations. The wife may demand the divorce when the husband, after marriage, is taken with a foul illness, if he ill-treat her, or if he leads a debauched, dissolute life.

The form in which the bill of divorce must be written is exactly prescribed. The husband gives it to his wife with the words: "This is your bill of divorce; take your bill of divorce; by it you are separated from me henceforth, and you may marry whom you like." The husband may also send the bill of divorce to his wife by an authorized agent, and the wife too may send an agent to receive the bill of divorce for her.

Eastern European Customs

Now let us glimpse the marriage customs of the Jews in Eastern Europe, which territory, up to the time of the war, and in some respects to the present, has been the center of Jewish life, and where the old customs have been faithfully and conscientiously

maintained. Many of these customs are much like those which were current among the German Jews in the Middle Ages, and many a *minhag,* which has long been forgotten in Western Europe and is recalled only by a casual reference in Responsa and in books on old rituals, is still very much alive in the East. This condition has been brought about by the fact that the Jews, who fled out of Germany during the medieval persecutions and settled in Poland and in Russia, carried with them and protected zealously the religious usages of their former home. The Eastern Jew still considers it the height of worldly happiness to live to lead his children "under the *chuppah.*" Marriages are contracted at a very early age, which though it may not be considered practical economically has doubtless contributed largely to the maintenance of the strict morality which reigns among the Eastern Jews.

Two weeks before the wedding day the parents and relatives of both bride and bridegroom acquaint the couple with the ritual precepts of married life, which they must obey all their lives in strictest fidelity, since these belong to the very foundations of the Torah. The first of the nuptial festivities is the so-called *schabbos aufrufen,* which occurs on the Sabbath before the wedding day. On that occasion the bridegroom is recognized for the first time as a full-fledged member of the community (*baal habaith*) and is given the honor of reading a particularly important portion of the Torah. As he comes forward to perform, his mother, grandmother, aunts, and other relatives in the women's gallery shower

him with almonds and raisins. The services are followed by a grand reception at the bridegroom's home, where the guests are served with drinks and the finest cakes and confections. The *furspiel* (introductory feast) takes place in the house of the bride that evening, when relatives and friends, the men and the women in separate rooms, are bountifully served.

The wedding day itself is one of deep spiritual introspection for both bride and bridegroom. According to ancient Jewish tradition, the bridal pair must fast until after the ceremony, even when it does not take place till the evening. The wedding day is, nevertheless, not a day of sorrow, but like the Day of Atonement one of spiritual exaltation and meditation. Both bride and bridegroom are very conscious of the solemnity of the occasion, and often give vent to their emotions in actual sobbing, especially if their parents are no more among the living. The nearest relatives come to the *chuppah* in their Sabbath raiment, and the bridal couple wear their new wedding garments, the bride appearing in a white gown and veil, the bridegroom wearing a silk coat and (in Galicia) a *streimel.* Both pronounce the *minchah* prayer, which includes the confessional (*viddui*) of the Day of Atonement.

The Whole Village

Practically the whole village is invited to attend the ceremony, since it is considered an insult not to be invited to the wedding of even a remote acquaintance. The invitation is extended by the *sarver* or *server* (from the French *servir*—to serve); and he

also, in his capacity of servant in the synagogue, supplies all the essentials for the ceremony.

Besides this functionary, the most important characters at the wedding are the *klesmer* and the *badchan.* The *klesmer* (from the Hebrew *kle zemer*—musical instrument) comprise a band of musicians, consisting of from three to six members, who play at weddings exclusively. They are itinerant people who travel from town to town, wherever they are called to play at weddings. The glory of minstrelsy is the *badchan* himself, a jester and master of ceremonies in one, who, besides his broad knowledge of things in general, must have poetic and musical talent and a native wit. The *badchanim* travel from one wedding to another, and from fair to fair, singing their songs and performing before audiences.

It is the *badchan* who, with the aid of the musicians, welcomes the guests as they enter. They assemble, men and women in separate rooms. The bridegroom sits at the head of the table in the room where the men are gathered; near him sit the rabbi and the other dignitaries of the community. Here many subjects are discussed, well interspersed with quotations from the Torah and the Talmud pertinent to the occasion; while the women and maidens amuse themselves with dancing in the women's hall. Suddenly a gloomy solemnity darkens this merrymaking. The so-called *kallabesingen* begins. The *badchan* steps up to the bride, who is surrounded by her attendants, and in a melodious, tristful song he relates the important experiences of her past life and draws for her the beautiful, happy world into which she is about to enter, dwelling upon

the great and difficult duties as well that await her as a wife and a future mother. The *chosonbesingen,* in which the *badchan* treats of the character and life of the bridegroom, follows.

Then the bridegroom, escorted by the male guests, enters the women's hall for the *kallahbedecken.* He lifts her long, heavy veil, the *decktuch,* and places it over the head of his bride; and at the same time some hops (in certain districts of the country, wheat grains are used) are sprinkled upon her as a symbol of fruitfulness. Presently the attendants dress the groom in the *kittel* (shroud), and in a solemn procession, each one carrying a burning candle, they lead him to the *chuppah.* The bride is brought to the *chuppah* in the same manner; her attendants, leading her by the hand, walk around the bridegroom seven times and then place her at his right hand. In the larger towns, the *chuppah* is erected in the home, but in the villages it is placed out in the open, in front of the synagogue. The marriage ceremony follows, at the end of which the bridegroom breaks a glass under foot. The blessing is pronounced and hilarious merrymaking bursts forth anew.

The bride and bridegroom are led into another room, seated at a table and left alone for a few minutes to symbolize their future life together (*yichud*), after which comes the wedding feast. Men and women seat themselves at separate tables, where there is an abundance of good things to eat as well as of homiletic wit. The *chazan* pronounces a *mischeberach* for every man present, for which he must accept some money from each one. Then the

badchan nas a witty comment to make about every man, beginning with the bridegroom and the more distinguished guests and going down the line, for which he is remunerated by each person accordingly. The *drusche-Geschenk rufen* (the calling out of the wedding gifts) begins at a signal given by the bride's father. The *badchan,* standing at the table, picks up every gift, holds it aloft that all many see, and calls out the name of the donor, ornamenting it with many exaggerated titles. After grace is said, the company gets ready for the *mitzve tänzel.* All the guests, even the strictest *chassidim,* dance with the bride. They do not touch her, however, but dance with her through the medium of her lace handkerchief, a gift from the bridegroom. The dance continues until late into the night. At the end, the *klesmer* play a goodnight song, the words of which they themselves sing.

Next morning, the young husband is escorted to the synagogue, where, for the first time, he puts on the *tallith* at prayers. At the same time, the mother and kinswomen of the young wife assemble and cut off more or less of her hair, which symbolized her maidenhood, placing upon her head the wig which her husband has given her the day before. According to ancient Jewish tradition, the next seven days are a continuation of the festival (*shivath jeme hamischte*), during which the bridal pair wear their Sabbath garments. The conclusion comes on the *schabbos morgen* of the Sabbath after the wedding; there is a large reception at the home of the parent, where the guests are served with drinks and with *lekach.*

The manner of celebrating marriages has undergone some changes in modern Judaism. In the past, there was simplicity combined with genuine and profound emotion. To-day, there is many a sign of exclusive luxury and outward show. Even the high conception of the sacredness of marriage very often has given way to a more lax view. All this is due to a tendency to admitting customs and standards of the environment.

A great deal of modern literature deals with criticism of the present form of marriage and marital life. These questions are eagerly discussed and people search for means to bring about healthy marital conditions. To us Jews, these problems have begun to become important only since the Jewish *Weltanschauung* has begun to be bewildered by the onrush of assimilatory tendencies. The law of Judaism views marriage with a sense of dedication and sacredness. It assures for it that peace and that oneness and mutual interdependence which forms the sine qua non of true happiness.

We need not go to the works of modern and supermodern writers of both sexes to discover the ideal of marriage. We are vouchsafed a source much purer and clearer. We can draw it from the never failing fountain of our holy doctrine, the Torah.

XI

THE HEBREW BIBLE

BY

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XI

THE HEBREW BIBLE

Bible means "book." But the Bible is not *a* book; it is *the* book. It is the most important of all books, of all times. Since its translation into Greek by Ptolemaus, king of Egypt, about the year 250 before the common chronology, it has always represented *the first work of the literature of the world.* After it was translated into the languages of all nations, any people who began to read it entered the highest community of civilization. And even when they neglected it the influence of the book did not cease, but its thoughts remained, even as light from the stars shines long after their extinction. The persons of whom the Bible tells are the best known in the memory of mankind. They have been the constant companions of all ages of men. Nothing has been so often represented artistically as the world of the Bible; and the places of its action are the second home of all mankind.

The Power of the Bible

This power of the Bible over our hearts is a fact of wonder in the material struggle for existence. Only one book reaches the transcendental and that is the Bible. It tells you of invisible powers, the

Creator of the world and His laws of love and justice, of consecration and of holiness; it teaches you of the pure soul which God has breathed into you, and which has dominion of the body and is part of eternity. This book declares war against the whole visible world. What seems to us the truest reality does not argue against the power of that which you do not see. Religion declares that the world belongs neither to itself nor to man, but to an invisible Power, and that it is dependent on His *metaphysic reality. The Bible has been the charter of the constitution of the moral world, by which the power of God on earth is eternally established.*

Magna Charta of Man

But this book is also the *magna charta of men and mankind.* When you wish to persuade man that he is more than the product of cruel, senseless chance, you read in the Bible his patent of nobility: "Thou hast made him but little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory. Thou has made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (Ps. viii).

Here it is said that he is created in the image of God, that he like God can spread love and goodness and achieve immortality. "You shall be holy, for I myself am holy, your eternal God" (Lev. xix. 2).

In this book of Law, high duties are ordered for man. How sublime and noble must he be to fill that destiny! Descended from the first man created by God, each man will find in the Bible a common aim of redemption and happiness. It has opened the earth to civilization; it has opposed war and con-

flict; it has destined man to an everlasting life of joy and blessing. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Is. xi. 9).

With this mission of the human world pessimism and materialism can no longer convince. The Bible forces us upward from despair to the highest joy of liberty, and to labor for the propagation of the Godly culture on earth.

Revelation

The Bible is the *book of the revelation.* It is the collection of the words of sage men to whom has been given a supernatural and superhuman knowledge, to whom had come so secure an enlightenment of the secrets of the world that they feel this knowledge to have been given them by God and not by their own power. Then it demonstrated to all that the experience of history confirmed and fulfilled all that they had divined. Such men were called prophets—*neviim.* The spirit of God was poured out over them, often against their will, so that their knowledge burned like a fire within them, robbed them of their calm, and forced them to go out and teach what they had heard and seen. Their doctrines were not welcome to the hearers, often bringing them widespread enmity. Decades later the world confessed to these martyrs that they were right; that their word was true. Even in our day, after four thousand years, time cannot shake its truth. "The word of our God shall stand forever" (Is. xl. 8).

Most of the prophets descend from *one* people,

the *Jewish.* It is a miraculous fact that the world through an epoch of about two thousand years has again and again produced men of prophetic inspiration and godly enlightenment, different in character, style, age, and surroundings, all of whom consciously or unconsciously ratified the words of their predecessors and successors. The Bible bears its proof of truth in itself. The prophets were not able to lie. Whenever a Jewish prophet proclaimed that he did not derive his words from higher inspiration, that he had merely heard them from other prophets or teachers, he was tried and publicly executed as *nabi hasheker,* a prophet of falsehood.

But the strictest assurance of the truth of the Bible is the Jewish people and its long history. It is the only eternal people, promised by the Bible. Though no people has met so much enmity, though none has been so steadily persecuted and driven, yet it is unweakened in numbers and strength. "You are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and I am God" (Is. xliii. 12). Therefore the Jewish people is called *Am Hasefer,* the people of the Bible.

Five elements are comprised in the Bible—history, law, prophecy, song, and wisdom. They are distributed over all the books of the Bible.

History

History comprises the creation, primitive times up to Abraham, the first ancestor of Israel, and the story of the Jewish people till the restoration of the second Temple and of the Jewish state under Ezra and Nehemiah. Only the prophet is able, with God's enlightenment, to avoid the false, subjective

judgment of men. Only they see the principles by which all actions become explicable. The books of history are: the first, fourth, and part of the second book of the Torah, Joshua, the Judges, Samuel and the Kings, Ruth, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the books of the Chronicles, a panorama of the whole Biblical time.

The Law

All the books of Moses contain the Law of the Torah—in particular the second, third and fifth. The Law teaches us our duties toward God and our fellow creatures, toward Jew and non-Jew; it teaches the consecration of labor of the body and the soul, the purity of the family, the sanctification of joy, the fulfillment of promises, care of the feeble and the poor, and the manner of divine service. In concentric circles the Law has been manifested. First, the seven Noahide laws which are valid for all the peoples; then the law of circumcision manifested to Abraham; then the Decalogue; then the Sefer Hab'rith, the book of the covenant (Ex. xx, xxii, and xxiii), to which Israel swore allegiance at Mt. Sinai. "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do and obey" (Ex. xxiv. 7). Then follows the book of the Tabernacle—"the law of the priests"—and of sanctity. At last comes Mishne Torah, the recapitulation in which Moses before his death communicates the laws of especial importance to the Holy Land.

This book of Law, the Torah, is the foundation both of our religion and of the whole Bible. The prophet who transmitted it to us is master of all

the prophets. That he was inspired is a permanent fact of our faith. For at Mount Sinai the six hundred thousand men standing about, were themselves in a higher state of prophecy; and they comprehended that God makes known His will to men, and that Moses was His mouthpiece. All the later prophets cleaved to the Torah. That which they wished and strove for was nothing more than the accomplishment of knowledge of the Law.

The Prophets

They warn and accuse the people who are in danger of stifling in the surrounding fog of paganism and immorality. They threaten them with divine punishment, with loss of country and of independence; but they also bless and console them in times of misfortune, and inspire them with the hope that Israel is not lost, that the law of God will some day be acknowledged, and that a descendant of David will redeem the world as an anointed of God—the Messiah.

In the first book of the Torah we have the blessings of Jacob. In the fifth book Moses himself delivers three admonitions and blessings; after the division of the Kingdom, Isaiah and Jeremiah, as well as the twelve minor prophets, offer consolation through all the ruin of Israel and Judah, the captivity, the stormy political developments under Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Persia, and Alexander the Great. Throughout they have kept awake the hope in God and trust in his assistance. The prophets were the conscience of their people, incorruptible, austere, fearless even before kings and despots.

But they were also the merciful physicians who bound up their wounds, and who saved the better self of the people for the great future. Even in the exile of Babylonia Israel was comforted and instructed by prophets—by Ezekiel, and by Daniel, who, in visions and images, foresaw the whole development of universal history.

Song

But at all times the prophets also loved song, *shirah*—holy poetry. It might be a song of thanksgiving or of lamentation, or of prayer and supplication, or a pure prophecy of the future.

In the Torah Moses and Israel sing the song of deliverance at the ruin of Pharaoh, and as his testament the great leader leaves the prophetic song (*Haazinu*), a retrospect of the whole activity of God in the fate of Israel. Deborah, the judge, in remembrance of her victory over Sisera, left us a wonderful song. Often the death of great heroes was celebrated in song.

To the fall of Jerusalem Jeremiah dedicates the elegies of the book *Echah,* in which the tears of mourning have changed into pearls of beauty. Solomon in the Song of Songs celebrates Israel's love for God as the love between bridegroom and bride. Solomon has also poetically celebrated the consecration of the Temple with a single song of prayer (II Kings iii.); and King Hezekiah his convalescence in a *michtom* (Is. xxviii. 8). But the greatest and richest of all singers of Israel was King David. To him we owe the Book of Psalms, the prayer book of mankind, which expresses all the emotions of the

religious soul in grief and in joy, in sin and in purity, in despair and in enthusiasm, in devotion and piety. Like the five books of the Torah, the five books of the psalter have become most popular. What the prophets have *taught* us, David has *sung* into our heart; therefore he is called the sweet singer of Israel.

Wisdom

The last element of the Bible is *Hachma,* "wisdom." Two books are especially dedicated to it, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, which are ascribed to the sage King Solomon. In these books rules for life and contemplation of human faults are given in the form of sentences and epigrams. To the division of *Hachma* the patient Job also belongs. In reality his is a book of religious philosophy, meditations on the difficult problems of life, especially the questions of suffering which strikes a man without guilt. The opinion that all suffering is only a punishment for committed sins is declined as thoroughly false; while it is shown that it is in fact a medium of education in the hand of God, who by it brings men to a higher perfection and deeper knowledge of the world. The rule of God in nature and history comes to this: the only wisdom of man is piety and virtue. Here the Book of Job agrees with the fundamental idea of *koheleth,* which proves the senselessness and vanity of all earthly efforts without religion.

The Canon

The Bible is only a limited excision of the rich literature of the Jewish people till the time of the Persian kings.

When Cyrus in 536 allowed the Jews to return,

and when Ezra, a second Moses, took in hand the spiritual improvement of the newly settled people, he founded the famous Synhedrion of "the men of the great synod," which set as its first task the collection and ordering of the Holy Writ. The principle was to gather all that had value for all time. But only the prophet is able to penetrate the future and to know what will still be important to later generations. In the great synod the last prophets Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and Ezra himself sat. One Talmudic opinion declared Ezra to be identical with Malachi. This union of wise men (*Sopherim*—those who know the Holy Writ) and prophets took upon themselves the task of presenting the Biblical Writ in its final form. Numerous prophets had preached to Israel. Their texts had to be examined, investigated as to their eternal value, edited, and brought into permanent order and arrangement.

The "Sidroth"

From the first days of the Jewish people the fundament of our religion was the Torah of Moses. During the forty years' wandering in the desert various portions of the Law were set down in scrolls (Gittin, 60). These were kept beside the tables of the Decalogue in the holy ark of the tabernacle, and later of the Temple. Each transcribed exemplar had to agree exactly in all details with the original, or become invalid. The punctuation and accentuation, the division of the verses and chapters have been handed down from generation to generation. The men of the great synagogue divided the Torah into fifty-three *sidroth* (parts), each of which is recited

in the synagogue on one fixed Sabbath of the year, the last on *Simhath Torah.* They placed the Torah in the center of the divine service, and in the life and thought of every week, and fastened it in the soul of the people as an eternal source of learning and of elevation, of piety and of religion.

"Neviim" (Prophets) and "Kethubim" (Hagiographa)

The two other parts of the Bible—Prophets and Hagiographa—received their final form from the men of the great synagogue. This is declared by the Talmud as follows: "The succession of the prophets' books is: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah and the book of the twelve prophets" (Baba Bathra, 36). To-day Isaiah, as the older, has been put before Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The Talmud mentions him as the last of three because, as the most consoling book, its proper place is at the conclusion. The third part—Kethubim—has, according to the same excerpt of the Talmud, the following order: Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Chronicles. In our Bible Ruth is placed after the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, and joins with the Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Koheleth, and Esther to form the book of the "five scrolls." Originally Ruth, as the genealogical history of David, should have been placed just before the Psalms; further, the works of Solomon should have been coördinate; and Job, as the elder work, should have preceded Solomon's works. But as the five scrolls had an especial im-

portance for the three pilgrimage feasts, for *Tisha B'Ab,* and for *Purim,* the whole arrangement was changed into that of our modern Bibles.

As to the authors of the books, the Talmud speaks:

> Who has written them: Moses wrote his book, the book of Balaam, and the book of Job. Joshua wrote his book and the last eight verses of the Torah (about the death of Moses). Samuel his book, the book of Judges, and Ruth. David wrote the Psalter in association with ten elders: Adam, Melkizedek, Abraham, Moses, Hemen, Jeduthun, Asaf, and the three sons of Korah (who contributed single songs. According to another reading—Solomon and the three Korahs, to whom Asaf belonged). Jeremiah wrote his book, that of the Kings, and Lamentations. Hezekiah and his coworkers wrote down the book of Isaiah, Proverbs, Shir Hashirim, and Koheleth. The men of the great synagogue wrote Ezekiel, the twelve minor prophets, Daniel and Esther. Ezra wrote his book and the genealogy of the Chronicles till his own day; and Nehemiah finished the book. His premature death prevented Isaiah from compiling his own work; and the writings of Solomon were compiled by the activity of the scribes of Hezekiah; Ezekiel and Daniel, because living in exile, did not wish to write down their prophecies there—therefore the last prophets, members of the Synhedrion, gathered their books, just as they comprised all the minor prophets into one book (Rashi). In the Torah the last verses are not written by Moses himself. About the authors of the book of Job also varying opinions have been offered—one that Moses wrote it.
>
> (Baba Bathra, 74a.)

Thus about the year 500, the Bible was concluded. Since that time it has not been altered. Though the learned men of other peoples attempted to prove that the books of the Bible had another origin and history than that which Jewish tradition teaches, still no manuscript of the books has ever been found which shows another text or even single important variation. There is extraordinary agreement, even in the manner of writing.[1] In the apocryphal book of Ben Sirah, whose Hebrew original was discovered in the Geniza at Cairo by Schechter, the author, about the year 200, celebrates the glory of the Bible and reckons up all its parts. The New Testament knows nothing but our Bible as transmitted to us. The old translations, the Targumim, in spite of this liberty of interpretation, have confirmed the exactness of our text and of our tradition.

The Bible is truth. Nothing of it can be altered or has been. So it will persist through the centuries. As God is ever the same, the book which tells of Him is always the same. *The Bible is and remains the eternal book of the eternal God in the hand and care of the eternal people.*

[1] Professor Sellin.

XII

THE CEREMONIAL LAWS IN THE ECONOMY OF JUDAISM

BY

RABBI I. EPSTEIN, PH.D., D.LITT.

"The Mitzvot have been given for the refinement of humanity."

—GENESIS RABBAH XLIV, I, and VAYIKRAH RABBAH XIII, 3

XII

THE CEREMONIES

Elements in Religious Consciousness

Summarizing the evidence obtained through a questionnaire on their religious feelings sent to a large number of persons of different creeds, Professor William James, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*" [1] forms the following conclusion as to the beliefs shared by all religious persons:

> 1. That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance. 2. That unison or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end. 3. That prayer or inner communion with the spirit thereof is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects, psychological or material, within the phenomenal world.

It becomes clear from this evidence that religion is an intercourse entered into by the human soul with the mysterious power upon which it finds itself dependent, and upon which its fate is contingent. We find ourselves in the presence of a Supreme Being of infinite power, other than ourselves, in whose hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind (Job xii. 10), great in counsel and mighty in work (Jer. xxxii. 13),

[1] P. 485.

who fascinates and inspires us with awe, and whom we cannot escape even if we would. "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? Or whither shall I fly from Thy presence? If I ascend heaven, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there would Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand would hold me" (Ps. cxxxix. 7-9).

This feeling of dependence as an essential element in our religious consciousness was already singled out by our Sages: "Know that the Lord hath made us, and not we ourselves," [2] is the Midrashic exegesis on Psalm c, verse 2 (Genesis Rabbah c, 1). Concentration on the being and the presence of the Eternal Living Presence within and around us, ever molding and conditioning and upholding us, evokes the profoundest emotions of wonder, admiration, love, and trust, and gives rise to a restless spiritual activity in quest of the Living God. Our heart cries out for communion with our Creator, Guardian, and Father. This holiest of human cravings finds its satisfaction in adoration and prayer, whereby the soul seeks to form a contact with the source of its intense being and the principle of its highest life. And the conviction of all religious people in prayer, that they are speaking to one who hears and cares for them, is the strongest proof, as it has been observed, that the religious quest is not in vain.

Effect of Religious Experiences

Religious experiences of communion, if repeated

[2] The Ketib being adopted instead of the Queri.

and regular, have a transforming effect upon human personality and character. The divine impact upon the soul transfigures it, reveals to it new levels of existence and activity, and summons it to a life of righteousness and inner saintliness. The awareness of the intimate presence and activity of a creating, loving God—in a word, God-consciousness—engenders a desire, often an intense craving after God-likeness, acting as an ideal and powerful incentive to virtue, and a deterrent from evil-doing. "Reflect upon three things," says Rabbi Judah the Prince in the *Ethics of the Fathers* (ii, 1), "and you will not come into the power of sin: Know what is above thee, an eye that seeth, an ear that heareth, and all thy works are inscribed in a book." This idea finds further development in the opening chapter of the *Shulhan Aruch:* "I have set the Lord continually before me, for He is at my right hand; I shall not be moved" (Ps. xvi. 8). This is a leading principle in the lives and strivings of the righteous, who walk ever in the presence of God. For a man's mode of life, his speech, his actions, his movements when alone in the house or in the intimate circle of his friends, are unlike those he would exhibit when in the presence of a great king: and how much more considered will his conduct be if he reflects that there stands over and above him the King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, whose glory fills the earth, watching and judging his conduct—even as it is written: "Can any one hide himself in secret places that I shall not see Him, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxiii. 24). Such contemplation must perforce

imbue him with a true sense of reverence and humility.[a]

Achievements of God-consciousness

This appreciation, linking religious experiences with moral and ethical values, though drawn in our case from Jewish sources, is nevertheless characteristic of all higher religions that associate the divine with moral attributes. The question then arises, how is this God-consciousness, the prerequisite to moral life, to be attained? Worship and prayer are, of course, excellent and ideal channels for the perception of this gift. But are not these efforts in spiritual perseverance and concentration often beyond what the average man, engulfed in the full tide of material activities and pursuits, is readily capable of yielding? It is true that man has within him the *yetzer ha-tob,* the desire for goodness, the impulse to virtue, the higher nature that impels him to live in decency and loyalty to God and to His ordained laws. But there is also the lower nature in man, the evil urge, or *yetzer hara,* the sensual, the beastly, opposed to the *yetzer ha-tob* and disputing its rule. Smelling of the earth, the lower nature interrupts man in his heavenly aspirations, checks him in his spiritual endeavors, bars his progress toward the better and worthier life toward which he is drawn, and unless harmonized or blended with the higher nature, it is bound to dim his God-consciousness, with a consequent dulling of the moral sense. How, then, is this essential harmony between the two conflicting forces within the heart of man to be secured?

[a] Translation of Dr. A. Feldman, with slight amendment.

The Reply of Other Religions

At this point Judaism parted company with the official teaching of the early Church. "Impossible!" replies the latter to the question propounded above. "These two elements in man are essentially antagonistic, and cannot exist side by side in amity. The only way to be alive to God, to be sensitive to His influence and presence, and to order our lives accordingly on spiritual and moral lines, lies along the path of asceticism and austerity, attended by fastings, vigils, and flesh castigations; the only means of escaping the horrors of sinful matter is by attaining the state of spiritual detachment in which all personal claims are abandoned and all bodily desires suppressed." Hence the doctrine that existence is under a curse, and that life is a vale of tears which man must struggle through in the best way he can.

The Jewish Attitude Toward Asceticism

Now that is an attitude totally alien to the spirit of Judaism. Both the prophets and the Sages of the Talmud were entirely opposed to that depressing view of life. It is true, we do find instances of ascetic views and practices in the Talmud, in Jewish history, and especially in later Kabbalistic works. We do come across Jewish saints adopting asceticism as a mode of life. Yet this was an ideal reserved for the few elect who felt they could achieve more in their spiritual strivings through abstinence, without, however, insisting on others following their example. Much less was this ideal ever upheld officially by the synagogue. The prophet Hosea did not deny the

value of life. Isaiah, who saw "the glory of God in His temple," was certainly very worldly and social in his *Weltanschauung,* when he pleaded for a better world order and a better state of society in the words: "God established the earth. He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited" (Is. xlv. 18), thereby impressing with a divine stamp all works that tend toward the social and economic advancement of the world. Nor were our Sages ascetics; they did not regard the body and flesh as contaminated and the appetites as rooted in evil. Abstention from anything not forbidden by the Law was to them a sin. "A man," so runs a well-known passage in the Talmud, "is to give account in the hereafter for permissible pleasures from which he abstained" (Yer. Kiddushin, iv). Individual fasting was likewise looked upon by them with disfavor, and they maintained the habitual faster to be a sinner (Ta'anit 11, a, b). The body of man is a sacred vessel holding the divine spark, the soul, the image of God in which man was created; and it is the duty of man to keep his body healthy, sound, and clean (Shabbot, 50, 6). The Biblical command, "You shall take heed of yourself" (Deut. iv, 15), is explained by the Rabbis as an injunction to take care of the body and its requirements (Ber. 32b). Hillel, the saint, bathed himself daily as a religious act (Vayikra Rabbah, 34, 3); and a woman like Etheldreda, who was canonized by the Church merely because she would never wash "in glory of her Maker," could not find a place on such merits in the gallery of Jewish saints. Nor were Maimonides, Saadia, and Judah Halevy ascetics; nor were

the great Hassidean Rabbis, the Baal Shemtob and Rabbi Beer. Judaism, being essentially opposed to austerity and abstinence, cannot mark these off as means to experiencing "nearness of God," with its transforming moral effects.

God-consciousness of the Jew

Yet despite the presumed worldly and social temper of the Jewish religion, the Jew is so far from being bereft of the God-sense that he is rather distinguished for the deep and abiding consciousness of the Eternal Living God that has characterized him throughout the ages. To quote the words of an eminent Jewish preacher:

> What was it that made the Jew great in the past? What was it that made the Jew the outstanding figure in the history of the world? What was it that made the word of the Jew the word of the world, the book of the Jew the book of the world, the prophets of the Jew the prophets of the world, the Bible of the Jew the book of the world's literature? It was not Israel's belief in God. No! It was his God-sense, his God-consciousness. That particular gift endowed the Jew with a moral idealism, moral passion, moral fervor, that gave to the world the peerless prophets, singers, and psalmists—Isaiah, Micah, Amos, David and the sons of Asaph —and that raised Israel to the position of moral and religious leadership.[4]

And to the present day, the religious Jew is still athirst and ahunger for God, as were the great pious

[4] This passage is quoted from memory and no claim to accuracy is made.

men in Israel in the past. He is truly God-intoxicated. He feels the presence of the Eternal in every fibre and nerve of his being. He is sensitive to His influence in all the walks of life—in the synagogue, in the house, in the market, in the workshop, in the counting-house, on his lying down, on his rising up, on his journey, in every action, utterance, movement, breath, and thought.

Reply of Judaism

"Mitzvot" as Source of God-consciousness

Whence, it may be asked, does the Jew draw this wonderful God-sense? Where lies the source of his amazing spirituality? In the legalism, in the practical observations of the Torah: *tallith, tephillin, kashruth, Shabbath,* and the other numerous rites and ceremonies that encompass the life of the Jew. All of which, included in the 613 *Mitzvot,* are religious and ethical in purpose. They all alike serve one aim: To "set the Lord continually" before the Jew, so that he may not be moved. Their very multiplicity is the perennial spring whereby the Jewish soul is ever refreshed and renewed; the spiritual power they generate confirms and strengthens morality without doing violence to human nature and to the physical and æsthetic senses. The inspiriting nature of the ceremonials help to establish at least some vague contact with the Divine Spirit, without his resorting to austerity and asceticism. No secular pursuits need interfere for one single moment with this essential relationship, which is the true subject matter of religion. On the contrary, by means of the *mitzvot* every action becomes sublimated into a

channel of communion, into an act of worship. Even joys and earthly comforts and pleasures become hallowed and sanctified, as the express command of the Holy Will, obedience to which dowers man with spiritual energy and moral power. Thus the Jew can achieve spiritual victory without doing violence to human nature, without fleeing from the world, without sealing his senses hermetically to the beauties and blessings of life. His moral perfection involves no suppression of the rightful use of the body, but rather its cultivation and restraint; nor does moral struggle issue, as in the case of some other religionists, in heroic and total abstinence, but in a condition of a moral and mental adjustment, in which, in the words of the Sages: "All deeds are done for the sake of Heaven" (*Ethics of the Fathers,* ii, 17). The *mitzvot,* thanks to the God idea which they inevitably suggest, even when carried out in a perfunctory manner,[5] have served more than anything else to build up the faith and moral character of our people, so as to render us, with all our failings and shortcomings, the people with the keenest moral sense in the world; the principle at work for that end being that of the familiar tag:

> Sow an action, reap a habit;
> Sow a habit, reap a character;
> Sow a character, reap a destiny.

And as long as we cling fast to these, our divinely instituted observances, we need have no fear about the destiny of Israel in the world of morality and pure religion.

[5] Cf. the Talmudic view: מצות אין צריכות כוונה.

The Critical View

Thus has an attempt been made to demonstrate the power of the Ceremonial Laws in arousing and directing our religious sense, and their efficacy in molding and shaping the moral and social relations of our people. There are critics, however, in our midst who hold in contempt the religious ceremonials of Israel, and who in their haste and blindness have lost the sense of proportion, and discarded the *mitzvot* from the equipment of their religious life. It was left for them to discover the "higher religion" of prophetism with its scorn for sacrifices and ritual, as distinct from the "lower religion" of priestliness, with its insistence on external observances and ceremonies. In support of their views, appeal is made to the prophets. Did not Isaiah, for instance, exclaim in a striking passage: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts. And I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats" (Is. i. 11). And thus a theory of antagonism between prophets and priests has been evolved, justifying the rejection of the Ceremonial Laws, both in their positive and negative aspect. The prophets as exponents of an exalted religion, it is argued, were animated with a profound contempt for the externalities of religion. Chiefly concerned with inward reality, character, and disposition, they strenuously opposed the outward religious activities and practices zealously pursued by the priests in a heathenish manner.

No fallacy affecting the religious life of our people

has been more widely adopted by many of our coreligionists and more sedulously fostered by the leaders in the Reform camp.

Crediting these modernists with all earnestness and sincerity in their love and zeal for the Faith of Israel, one cannot help thinking that what lies beyond their attitude toward our Ceremonial Laws, their ridicule of our time-honored precepts, is that these somehow tend to interfere with the even tenor of life, and to project themselves in such a way into the soul as to ruffle their self-complacency and self-satisfaction. Nevertheless the boisterous noise of criticism must not be allowed to silence the voice of truth, and a few observations exposing the hollowness of the critical view are not out of place in an appreciation of the important place filled by the Ceremonial Laws in the economy of Judaism.

Priest and Prophet—A Refutation

In the early religious life of Israel there were prophet and priest. Each had his special function to discharge. The task of the prophet was to enunciate moral principles and ideals of righteousness. The priest had charge of the ceremonial of sacrifice and worship. They complemented each other. The prophet contributed greatly to deepen the ideas which the sacrifice and ritual conveyed; and the priest helped to intensify the people's religious consciousness. The priest did not exalt religious practices at the expense of moral values; nor did the prophet exalt the ethical at the expense of the ritual. To think that priest and prophet were continually at loggerheads, and to contend that each rep-

resented two distinct, exclusive views of religion, is to ignore the evidences of Jewish history, and to read the Bible through blinkers. How, for instance, account for the zealous prophet Elijah's *cri de cœur:* "They have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thy altars, . . ." if this prophet had set his face against outward expressions of religion, as our critics would bid us think? If the prophets were really opposed to the priestly religion how are we to explain the minute detailed provisions for the Temple service and its solemn ceremonials in the future, hopefully anticipated by the prophet Ezekiel in the last nine chapters of his book?

Even Jeremiah, whose vigorous denunciation of sacrifices the critics are fond of quoting: "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of Egypt concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, hearken to my voice, and I will be your God" (vii. 21-23), looks forward to the restoration of the sacrificial system in the rebuilding of the Temple: "Thus saith the Lord . . . neither shall the priests, the Levites, want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to burn oblations, and to do sacrifice all the days" (xxxiii. 18), nor does the theory that this last passage is a later addition of the Prophet's disciples affect the value of the evidence. The disciples' praise could hardly have been evolved from the Master's scorn. All of which proves that the prophets did not advocate the abolition of external forms of worship, but on the contrary regarded them as essential elements in fostering and sustaining the religious spirit. It was

the divorcing among their contemporaries of true inner piety and moral integrity from external observances that aroused the righteous indignation and scathing rebuke of the prophets. With their passion for reality, they insisted that devotional expression must be accompanied by inward sincerity and righteousness of life, and indeed, this prophetic criticism of unreality applies to every conceivable form of religious observance. Isaiah not only denounces sacrifices and offerings but also Sabbath and prayers, new moon and Sabbath, the holding of convocations: "I cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn assembly! . . . And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear, your hands are full of blood" (Is. i. 13, 15). And yet no one will maintain that the prophet aspired to abolish the Sabbath day, nor will the most radical Reform rabbi on that score advocate the closing down of temples and synagogues, and the discontinuance of prayers and public worship. To single out the *Mitzvot,* the Ceremonial Laws of the Torah, therefore, as objects of ridicule apart from other devotional practices still observed in the Reform camp, and to have the temerity to appeal to the prophets in justification of this procedure, is a mark of inconsistency or of deficiency in the true critical faculty.

The Traditional Viewpoint

No. There is no quarrel between prophet and priests; nor was there ever one. As guardians of the Law of God they both cherished the same ideals,

both fostered the same interests on behalf of the religion of Israel. The prophets never preached the abrogation of the Ceremonial Law; they came to fulfill it. They never underrated the significance of *Mitzvot* as modes of religious self-surrender, with a power to provoke within the soul of the worshiper that religious consciousness which alone can release in man all the goodness, kindliness, and sweetness of character which human personality is capable of reproducing. What they did stress, and it is what the most resolute formalist can endorse word for word, was that it is only when the heart is right with God that it can find fit and proper expression in the well-ordered worship in the temple, and be brought nearer to God by ritual and ceremony, these outward observances helping to quicken and vivify the soul of the devotee. Nor did the true priest—for there were false priests as there were false prophets—ever hold that one could shelter himself behind the carcass of the sacrifice from the judgment of God. *Mitzvot* and *Maassim Tobim*—Ceremonial Laws and the Claims of Humanity—these are the two precious gems in the glorious crown of the Torah, and to separate one from the other is to dim its brightness and to grope in darkness in search of religious experience.

"Mitzvot" as Only Source of Moral Autonomy

All this is so simple and so clear that the persistence of the critical theory among Jewish religious leaders, professing profound reverence for the prophets as true exponents of Jewish religion, would be amusing were it not deplorable for its disastrous

results. Strip the Jewish life of the *Mitzvot,* and you destroy its spirit. Remove the Ceremonial Laws and the whole edifice of Jewish morality may yet come clattering in ruins about our ears. This may be regarded as a bold statement, but it is borne out by experience. Whence are drawn the majority of our moral delinquents and criminals that disgrace the name of the Jew "for a derision among their enemies," if not from those whose lives are bereft of the humanizing influence of the Ceremonial Laws? One will rarely if ever find a Torah-true Jew guilty of a criminal or other felonious act. Why? Because the *Mitzvot* are the most remarkable and effective machinery devised to supply man with moral autonomy, defined by Dr. H. E. Fosdick as "the desire and capacity of the individual to govern himself from within"; and for Jews there is nothing else in the world to take their place for that particular end. It is well and good to wax eloquent about the sublime teachings of the prophets, their passion for righteousness and social justice; to inculcate their lofty conceptions of morality. But how cure the vices, evil dispositions and propensities, and the "deceitfulness and weakness" of the human heart, making man willing to live up to those ideals and to translate them into life? As Lecky in his *History of European Morals* [6] remarks: "Simply to tell men what is virtue and to extol its beauty is insufficient. Something more must be done if the characters . . . are to be molded and the inveterate vices eradicated." And this something more which neither philosopher nor even prophets are capable of

[6] I, 292.

supplying is furnished by the Ceremonial Laws. They train our minds and educate our hearts to do good and abstain from evil. In the words of Maimonides (*Guide* iii, 31), "They serve to inculcate some truth, remove some erroneous opinion, to establish proper relations to society, to diminish evil, to train in good manners and to warn against bad habits." The association of ideas which they suggest, the God-consciousness which they evoke, cannot fail to cultivate and ennoble our intellect, emotions, and feelings, and to help to reproduce in us in a greater or lesser degree the divine pattern and ideal of holiness and righteousness, nor is it to the point to argue that there are a large number of people who have dispensed with ritual and ceremony without any apparent spiritual loss.

After all, "Every man is," as Oliver Wendell Holmes puts it, "an omnibus in which all of his ancestors are seated," and the passion for morality which non-observant Jews may exhibit is simply fed on the accumulated capitalized spiritual reserves built up by sturdy and pious forbears, whose blood still courses in their veins; and as long as human nature remains what it is, as long as our social order falls short of the prophetic level by being disfigured through vice and evil there will be need of some sustaining spiritual pabulum with saving strength from the power of sin. Further, among other things, Jewish Legalism stands out unique and supreme as the one unifying bond linking the countless and endless unbroken succession of Jewish generations into one priestly kingdom centered in the Lord of Lords, in the King of Kings. The unvarying charac-

ter of our ceremonies, the undeviating form of our religious prescriptions observed and celebrated throughout the centuries and throughout the world by Jews of different shades of thought, feelings and philosophies—by rationalists and mystics, scholastics and humanists—gives a sense of reality to the continuity of spirit that connects the present to the past, and a sense of security for the preservation of this selfsame spirit in the future. Nor is there anything surpassing legalism in its preservative powers. As history and experience have shown, wherever and whenever Jewish life has throbbed with ritual and ceremony, there and then Judaism thrived and flourished. But as soon as these were discarded from the equipment of religious life, there followed disintegration and decay, ideals of universalism, social and categorical imperatives proving no more powerful to stop the sweeping process than the proverbial broom in staying the advance of the ocean tide.

Conclusion

When we seriously consider and thoroughly appreciate the effectiveness of the Ceremonial Laws in satisfying the holiest affections of the Jewish soul, and in preserving and furthering the morality of our people, we feel prompted to pour out our hearts in gratitude before the Almighty, and to voice our feelings in the words of the festival *Amidah:* "Thou hast chosen us from all peoples, Thou hast sanctified us by Thy commandments, and Thou hast called us by Thy great and holy name."

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